

Daniel De Leon was a leading figure in the American socialist and labor movements for many years. This book is the first to examine in detail De Leon's role from 1890 to his death in 1914.

Daniel De Leon gave up a lectureship on law at Columbia University and, dogged by poverty, devoted his life to the labor movement. He strenuously opposed dilution of scientific socialism. He fought opportunists and careerists and championed the cause of the working class against attacks from rising imperialism. For many years De Leon was editor of the *Daily People*, the only socialist daily in the English language. He translated, edited and published, in English for the first time many of the classical writings of Marx and Engels. His numerous pamphlets and lectures stimulated the education of an entire generation.

Though basically sectarian, De Leon nevertheless plunged into many significant movements. Under his leadership, his party was the first to conduct a national socialist election campaign. He was a leading force in the powerful united front in defense of the framed-up leaders of the Western Federation of Miners. He helped build a broad movement against the Spanish-American War.

De Leon championed the cause of the Black people, the unorganized and the unemployed and the unskilled workers. Though noted for a vituperative tongue, he stretched a comradely hand to Eugene Debs and Bill Haywood and with them organized the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

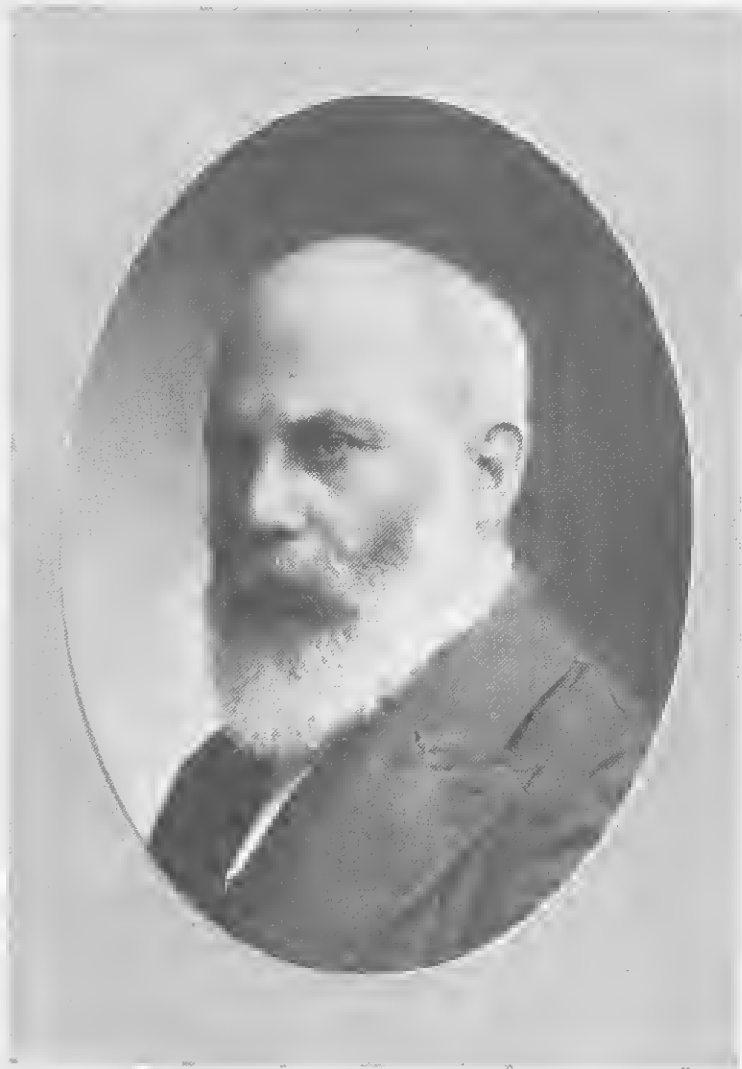
Despite his rigid formulas, De Leon was a mass figure; at his funeral thousands of mourners choked New York streets, many kneeling in prayer as the cortege passed.



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Daniel De Leon in his later years

The Life and Times of Daniel De Leon

Carl Reeve

Foreword by Oakley C. Johnson



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DEDICATION

*To my wife, Ann,
and my daughters,
Carla and Susan*

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FOREWORD

By Oakley C. Johnson

It is time for a closer, more personal and more analytical study of Daniel De Leon than has yet been made. It is not necessary any longer to let an outgrown political grouping—the present Socialist Labor Party—stand between us and the man himself, nor our own political prejudices between our judgment and his genuine accomplishments.*

De Leon was a towering figure in American labor history. He came into the organized socialist movement just fourteen years after the formation of the Workingmen's Party of the United States (1876). It was a period of intense strike struggles and labor organization. The Knights of Labor was strong; the American Federation of Labor was beginning; the Eight-Hour Day was a Marx-endorsed labor demand. But the anarchists under Johann Most were also prominent, and the followers of Lassalle were trying to seize control of the socialist movement. Such a time demanded a strong leader, and De Leon was the man. He combatted the anarchists, opposed the Lassalleans, polemicized against the German sectarians, denounced the labor opportunists, and fought the capitalists all at the same time. The fact that some anarchistic syndicalism rubbed off on *him*, and that he developed a sectarianism of his own, is not, as we look back, so very surprising.

Indeed, if we were to name one man in American Labor who dominated the period of 1890 to 1900, it would have to be De

* Much of the material about De Leon's personal life in this Foreword was obtained by Oakley Johnson in a series of interviews with Solon De Leon, Daniel's eldest son. Some of these facts are here made public for the first time.

Leon. After the turn of the century other men—Debs and Haywood among them—began to share the leadership. But in the critical period when Marxism was taking organizational form, De Leon was easily foremost. It is time to give the man his due.

It is in this larger spirit that Carl Reeve has produced the present work, *The Life and Times of Daniel De Leon*, giving attention to De Leon's character as well as his doctrines. Reeve notes that even De Leon's bitterest enemies paid tribute to his self-sacrificing career, and his unswerving personal integrity. This new study by an American student of Marxism acknowledges and describes De Leon's contributions to American labor, but also delineates his theoretical departures from Marxism, and the historical roots of those departures.

Considering De Leon's undeniable importance in American labor's past, it is strange indeed that no authentic biography of him has yet been written, and his political heirs have made no apparent effort—beyond the publication of fragmentary journalistic memoirs—to preserve and make available the essential data. De Leon's antecedents, even his birth and ancestry, are shrouded in what seems deliberate mystery.

Some basic facts have nevertheless been unearthed. Daniel De Leon was born on the Dutch-owned Caribbean island of Curaçao, December 14, 1852. His parents were Jewish.* His father, Salomon De Leon, a citizen of Holland, was a surgeon in the Dutch colonial army, and held an eminent position in the Curaçao government. His mother was Sarah (Jesurun) De Leon.

Family tradition records that on one occasion a Danish ship came to Curaçao with a crew afflicted with typhus. The senior De Leon ordered the ship quarantined, and took energetic measures not only to protect the population but treat the sailors. He succeeded in both efforts, prevented an epidemic and saved the lives of many of the Danish seamen. For this service he was made a knight of the Order of St. Danneborg by the Danish

* There has been (but is no longer) a controversy over whether or not De Leon was Jewish. De Leon himself seems to have had very little patience with such inquiries, as Waldo Frank noted. He simply did not give a continental! *Commentary*, July, 1947, pp. 43-51.

government. The ornate gold decoration of the Order is in possession of another branch of the family, but his gold-fligreed parade sword of the Dutch Army, with its scabbard, was brought to New York by Daniel De Leon as a keepsake.

Salomon died when Daniel De Leon was twelve years old. According to recent research by Isaac S. Emmanuel, the "first occupant" of a new Jewish cemetery in Curaçao was "Dr. Salomon de Leon, who died on January 18, 1865."*

Long afterward in New York a photograph of William Tecumseh Sherman adorned the mantelpiece in the De Leon tenement living room, Daniel saying that it was the best picture he had of his father!

The family is believed to have come originally from Spain to Holland; it transferred to the island of Curaçao some time after Dr. Salomon De Leon received his military commission.

Solon, Daniel's eldest son, was actually named Salomon, after his grandfather, in accordance with the family tradition that the first-born boy in each generation be named after the father's father. But "Solon" became an early familiar nickname, largely because it was close to *Salomon*, but partly, perhaps, because of his father's love of Greek classicism.

The young Daniel De Leon, after receiving some education at home, was sent to Europe to study. It was there, in Germany and Holland, that he acquired the Greek and Latin learning that he used to such good purpose in his later political life. In the process he added German, French, and Dutch to his native Spanish; English he perfected after coming to the United States.

As this is written, word comes from a researcher abroad of new specific data about De Leon's European schooling. Mrs. J. M. Welcher, head of the Dutch-Belgian Dept. of the International Institute of Social History, writes (December 16, 1969) in part as follows:

Recently, however, I found Daniel De Leon mentioned

* Isaac S. Emmanuel, *Precious Stones of the Jews of Curaçao, Curacaoon Jewry*, 1656-1957. Bloch Publishing Company, New York, 1957. (The "precious stones" refers to the grave stones in the cemetery, from which the author got his information.)

in the "Album Academicum van het Athencum Illustre on van de Universiteit van Amsterdam," edited: Amsterdam, 1913, by R. W. P. de Vries, p. 255.

In the year 1870-71 "Leon (Daniel De), med., 17 j." was matriculated as student of medicine, 17 years old, a member also of the "Amsterdamsch Studenten Corps" (= Amsterdam Student Corps). In 1872 he went to New York.*

In Curaçao Daniel had a childhood sweetheart, Sarah Lobo, whom on his return from Europe he married. They had an elaborate Jewish wedding. Then, about 1874, he came to live permanently in New York, bringing with him not only his young bride but also his ancient mother, the widow of Dr. Salomon De Leon.

Solon's mother, Sarah, may have been born in Caracas, Venezuela, where the Lobos resided at least intermittently, and from which place they moved to Curaçao. This is probably the origin of the oft-repeated but incorrect supposition that her husband, Daniel De Leon, was a Venezuelan.

In New York the family lived "at 112 West 14th Street, in the heart of a Spanish-speaking community," Solon tells me, where he himself was born, September 2, 1883. There was another and younger son, Grover Cleveland De Leon, who lived only a year and a half. From there the family moved to lower Second Avenue, and then to a brownstone front in the East 80's, where Sarah (Lobo) De Leon died of childbirth fever, bearing two still-born twin sons, on April 29, 1887. She was not quite twenty-one years old. Solon, her eldest son, was three.

This was a difficult time for Daniel De Leon, still trying to find himself politically and to live as well. Sarah (Solon's mother) died right after the Henry George mayoralty campaign, in which De Leon was profoundly interested, and the inner trials he suffered can only be imagined.

* Mrs. Welcher wrote after seeing the "Bibliography By and About Daniel De Leon" prepared by Carl Reeve and myself some years ago and published by the American Institute for Marxist Studies. (AIMS Bibliographical Series No. 3, 1966.)

He had already managed to study law and political science at Columbia University, and had received his degree of LL.B. in 1878. He had been associate editor of a Spanish paper advocating Cuban independence, and had taught school in nearby Westchester County. He had in 1883 won a prize lectureship at his alma mater, Columbia, where he then taught for two three-year terms.* And now he was fascinated by the socialist ideals of Edward Bellamy, in *Looking Backward*, published the very year Sarah Lobo died.

He secured the services of Mrs. Mary Redden Maguire, a warm-hearted but illiterate Irish woman, to take care of Solon and Grover, and to act as his housekeeper. They moved to her five-room, third floor, walk-up, coldwater tenement flat at 1487 Avenue A. in a German-Irish-Bohemian working-class neighborhood. She was a kindly foster-mother for three-year-old Solon, who, as the years passed, went to public school and later to the College of the City of New York, eventually winning his A. B. degree.

Meantime, Daniel De Leon joined first the Knights of Labor in 1888, then the Bellamy Nationalist movement in 1889, and finally—in October, 1890—the Socialist Labor Party. Its doctrines were at that time a mixture of the ideas of Karl Marx, Ferdinand Lassalle, and Michael Bakunin, with a leaven of Edward Bellamy, and its membership, including many German immigrants, reflected this blend. Organizationally it was diffuse, un-centered, utopian, without clear direction.

The entrance of Daniel De Leon brought about some significant changes. In theory he put the emphasis on Marxism as he understood it, and insisted on the party's immediate involvement in political activity. He himself ran for governor of New York in 1891, and in 1892 saw to it that the Socialist Labor Party for the first time had candidates also for the highest office. In a very real sense De Leon was a "Pathfinder," the term applied to him by Joseph Schlossberg—a friend and follower of De Leon, in his collected essays, *The Workers and Their World*, 1935.**

* W. J. Ghent, *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. V, pp. 222-224.
** Chapter 17, Daniel De Leon—a "Pathfinder."

De Leon was appointed national lecturer of the party in 1891, when he first ran for office, and this work, as well as political campaigns, took him to many cities across the country. In one of these tours, while in Independence, Kansas, he met Bertha Canary, a schoolteacher of 26. She became his wife in 1892, and in ensuing years bore him five children. Bertha was a member of a pioneer family from Kentucky which had moved westward in a covered wagon. Her father had enlisted in the Union Army in the Civil War, and had been confined to the Confederate prison at Andersonville.

Bertha De Leon, Solon's step-mother, was a socialist sympathizer, and prided herself on her independence of mind. She was an iconoclast. She attended church from time to time, but declined to accept any confession of faith. After the marriage, the De Leons continued to reside at the east side tenement of Mrs. Maguire, who now shared in the household work and child care of the growing family.

The five children of this union were, in order of birth, Florence, Censerice, Gertrude, Paul, and Donald. The father selected two of these names. "My dad picked Gertrude as an old family name," Solon reports, "and Censerice because, as legend had it, a Goth named Censerice had forced the Pope to kiss his toe."

Solon was nine when his father re-married, and grew up, one may say, in a political atmosphere. He clearly remembers his father's appearance, his habits, his campaigns.

De Leon was not a tall man, but he was far from "little," nor was he—as some have said—"slight" in structure (at least in his mature years). He was five feet five (his son Solon five feet four), and strongly built, actually stocky. There is a story that one hot day in the *People* office on William Street, De Leon and Henry Kuhn, the party's national chairman, decided to go to Coney Island and cool off. They got into bathing suits, and, as they strolled and sat on the beach, Kuhn took a sharp look at De Leon's muscular chest and shoulders, and exclaimed in German, "Why, you're a giant!" (*Du bist ein Riess!*) Without a strong physical foundation, De Leon could never have sustained the gruelling tasks he set himself and carried out.

De Leon wore a full beard and moustache, and had grey eyes that looked at one in a direct, sometimes quizzical, gaze. He was mild, even courtly, in manner, except when assailing a political opponent, when his gift for language exceeded the ordinary.

In his campaigns for office, De Leon did both indoor and outdoor speaking. In one election effort he had a horse-drawn wagon and a driver, and went from one selected street corner to another, speaking from the back of the truck. Usually he had enthusiastic crowds, and much applause. Solon as he grew older went often with his father on these neighborhood travels, and does not recall any hostility or disorder. Not infrequently a part of the crowd would follow along after the wagon, and listen again at the next stopping place.

Often after his parades De Leon spoke from the balcony of the old wooden "cottage" at the north end of Union Square, the traditional forum for radicals. He spoke also in various union halls, notably the Labor Lyceum at 64 East Fourth Street.

Not long after 1900, when the Socialist Labor Party competed with the newly established Socialist Party, De Leon ran for Assemblyman in the 16th Assembly District of New York against J. C. Phelps Stokes, the millionaire socialist who was his right-wing opponent. But usually he ran against candidates of one or another of the two old capitalist parties.

He had a clear, sharp voice, very exact in enunciation, and deliberate in delivery. He did not shout, or "holler." He spoke in a warm, emotional tone, ranging from sympathetic appeal to revolutionary anger. He was always well-informed on the happenings of the day, and illustrated his points vividly with references to them. He used frequent allusions to the classics, and also to the Bible and to Shakespeare. His appeal was to the good sense and intellect of his hearers. He spoke convincingly.

Solon too was a party spokesman from about 1905, when the Industrial Workers of the World was set up, to 1912. He was sent on a speaking tour as far as Wisconsin, and in these years worked closely with his father. The political disagreement between them came later.

De Leon gave up wearing a white shirt and conventional tie

after he left the University, and, like Bill Haywood and Vincent St. John, of the Wobblies, wore a blue cotton shirt. De Leon, however, also had a white handkerchief, starched by his wife Bertha, which he folded triangle-wise around his neck and pinned the folded edge to his shirt in front. This gave the semblance of a collar.

In winter he wore a heavy ulster, with a woolly surface, a really warm overcoat. He never put his arms into the sleeves, but wore it like a cape over his shoulders, walking from home to the elevated trains and back. He carried a brown satchel containing his numerous papers with one hand, while with the other he held together the edges of the ulster as tight as he could. He couldn't button the coat because his arms were under it! For a time he carried a gold-headed cane which an admirer had given him.

For head wear in winter, he wore a black slouch felt hat, with a wide brim. In summer, a white yachting cap, with a sun visor.

About 1896, the family began the custom of a summer house in the country. De Leon was introduced by a party friend to the old colonial town of Milford, Connecticut. A river ran through the town, and the first flour mill in the state had been built there. Bertha would move to a rented flat with the children early in May and stay till early October. Later, when larger and more permanent rentals were obtained, a garden was planted.

As years went on, De Leon worked out a summer schedule by which he went up on a Saturday, stayed all the following week, and returned to the city on Monday, nine days later. This put him in town five days every alternate week.

In these rural refuges he had one room to himself, with a kitchen table as a desk, and here he wrote daily editorials and sent them in by mail. He also sent instructions for the make-up of the weekly edition, of which he had been editor since 1892.

He always carried many papers, but no notepad. He did, however, make marginal notations on books he was reading.

In the summer of 1905, Solon worked at the trade of house painter, wearing the painter's regular white outfit. When he quit this line of work in the fall, Daniel took over the painter's suit, and thereafter this garment, plus a wide-brimmed straw hat, was

his costume for gardening. He liked to chop weeds with a hoe, also to pick and bring in garden products—radishes, peas, string beans, tomatoes, corn, whatever there was. Bertha did the planting.

De Leon enjoyed swimming, and the little town of Milford, situated as it was on the Connecticut shore of Long Island Sound, afforded plenty of opportunity. On a good day the whole family went to the beach, Bertha with the young kids in a baby cab, the elder ones walking, Solon riding his bike, and the Old Man strolling along. At the beach, the Old Man would swim a bit, sit down and read, then swim again.

In his New York City home he had no "desk" such as the table he used in the country. Desk work, of which there was plenty, was confined to the paper's office, then situated at 184 William Street.

The People, a weekly, became the *Daily People* on July 15, 1900, the first socialist daily paper in the English language.* The *Daily People* and the national office of the Socialist Labor Party were quartered in the first years of the century in a four-story triangular structure in the City Hall area, at 2-6 New Reade Street. The party office, where national secretary Henry Kuhn and others worked, was on the top floor. The Old Man had his office on the third floor—the pointed end of the building, well-lighted on both sides, and separated by a partition from the general editorial room where other writers were. On the ground floor was the New York Labor News Company, the pamphlet-publishing arm of the party, headed part of the time by Julian Pierce. In the basement were the composing room and press room, where the paper was printed. About 1905 the *Daily People* moved to 28 City Hall Place, with more or less similar arrangements.

It was from the *Daily People* as a base, as Reeve has docu-

* Second was the *Chicago Daily Socialist*, 1906-1912; third, the *New York Daily Call*, 1908-1917; then the *Seattle Daily Call*, 1917-1918; followed by the right-wing *New York Daily Leader*, 1918-1923. After them came the *Daily Worker*, Communist, 1924-1958; the *Daily People's World*, San Francisco, 1938-1957; and the *Daily Worker's* successor, the *Daily World*, founded in July, 1968, in New York.

mented in detail, that De Leon went forth to challenge the champions of capitalism in various public forums. In these debates De Leon reached toward America's intellectuals, who, from the days of Margaret Fuller of *The Dial* and Horace Greeley of the *Tribune*, to the present, have been sympathizers of socialism. A number—like the Rev. George D. Herron—did join the Socialist Labor Party, only later to go on to Debs' Socialist Party.

Solon was a paid member of the *Daily People* staff (\$12 a week, then \$15) from 1905 to 1911. About 1912 Solon and Louis C. Fraina (who built a reputation long afterward as Lewis Corey) teamed up as rank and file party members to get improvements in the paper and do away with its dogmatic and quarrelsome approach. They found themselves on the outside. Both Solon and Fraina went on to the Socialist Party, and its Left Wing, and later to the Communist movement.

A final note: It seems to me particularly fitting that Carl Reeve, scholar-activist and youngest son of Ella Reeve Bloor, should author this book about the work and ideas of Daniel De Leon. Mother Bloor was a member of the Socialist Labor Party for some four years (1897-1902) and worked closely with De Leon.

"Daniel De Leon and I became friends," she says in her autobiography, *We Are Many** (1940). "We were both determined that the Socialist classics of France and Germany should be translated into English, so that the American movement could get the much-needed theoretical groundwork to be found in those works. De Leon translated Kautsky's pamphlets before Kautsky departed from the line of Marx. I became very much interested in the New York Labor News Company—the first organization that published revolutionary books and pamphlets in English on a large scale. Its manager was Julian Pierce. Together we proof-read the pamphlets translated by De Leon, often having to reconstruct the English, a greater task than we ever let him know."

Mrs. Bloor's life story as given in *We Are Many* is a source book for labor and radical history. She knew all the leaders of

the time: Lucien Sanial and Hugo Vogt, co-workers of De Leon, Eugene V. Debs, union organizer and Socialist Party founder; Victor Berger, socialist congressman; William D. Haywood, head of the Industrial Workers of the World; and many others. She herself belonged successively to Debs' Social Democracy of America, then De Leon's Socialist Labor Party, then the Socialist Party of America, and finally the Communist Party of the United States.

Mother Bloor's son, Carl Reeve, author of this work, has put in years of study on De Leonism and the Socialist Labor Party. Numerous articles by him on these subjects have appeared since 1927, some of which have been reprinted in the Soviet and world press. He is undoubtedly the ablest all-round expert today in the United States on De Leon's ideas and role in history.

* An allusion to Shelley's *Masque of Anarchy*: "Ye are many, they are few."

PREFACE

In the writing of this book, I have been motivated by the desire to put the career of Daniel De Leon into focus. Labor historians have too often relegated a few paragraphs to De Leon as a brilliant man, but as a sectarian. It is necessary to fill the vacuum and understand why De Leon was the dominating figure in the American socialist movement for more than fifteen years.

His doctrinaire followers repeat his formulas as cure-alls for every present day ill and take the attitude that "the king can do no wrong." On the other hand, many "left wing" writers admit that De Leon waged a splendid fight against reformism and opportunism. But, they say, his sectarianism almost ruined and perverted the socialist movement.

Neither extreme gives the proper perspective nor describes De Leon's contributions. They distort the accurate picture of his imprint on his time.

A large body of facts about De Leon's life and work has had to be rescued from obscurity. He did considerably more than fight opportunism. He opposed the developing imperialism in the United States, especially in the Spanish-American War period of 1898, when his efforts in exposing his own government's motives, foreshadowed Lenin's position at a later date.

De Leon did have a sectarian formula, which too often isolated the Socialist Labor Party. But De Leon for many years was the editor of a daily socialist paper, the *Daily People*, for some of those years the only socialist daily in the English language. As such, following current events of the labor movement every day, and, in the heat of controversy, De Leon, fortunately, often forgot,

PREFACE

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in his articles and editorials, his formula of not fighting for immediate demands. For this reason, there is a healthy inconsistency in his activities. Against united fronts, he was a leading spirit in one of the most powerful united fronts in American labor history—the defense of the leaders of the Western Federation of Miners who were framed on murder charges. Against immediate demands, he advocated a model pension plan, in opposition to reformist Congressman Victor Berger's miserable bill. A sectarian, he was a mass figure, at whose funeral, thousands of mourning workers choked the streets, many kneeling in prayer as his cortege passed. Tinged with syndicalism and Lassalleism, he did more than any man for nearly two decades to popularize in English the works of scientific socialism. Noted for a vituperative tongue, he stretched a comradely hand to Gene Debs, Bill Haywood and others, and with them organized the IWW. He demanded that attention be paid to the need to organize the unorganized workers and taught the labor movement the advantage of industrial unionism.

He was a powerful force in the support of the strikes of the rank and file miners, as opposed to the class collaborationist policies of John Mitchell, president of the United Mine Workers of America. He spoke at strike meetings of the New York needle trades workers. He championed the cause of the unskilled Blacks and foreign-born workers. His followers played an important role in "Coxey's Army" of unemployed. He fought opportunism and corruption in the labor movement, effectively, and on a world scale. De Leon was influential in socialist circles in Canada, Australia, the Scandinavian countries, Scotland and England, as well as Ireland, where James Connolly was brought into the socialist movement by his writings.

De Leon's sectarianism and his unMarxian theories of the state and the trade unions are studied here, and the root causes of De Leon's theoretical errors, which developed in the peculiar American economic situation and in the prevalent influence of Lassalleism and Bakuninism, which De Leon inherited.

Scores of socialist leaders, while they left the Socialist Labor Party, because of its lack of, and indeed antagonism to mass

work, expressed indebtedness to De Leon for the grounding he gave them in Marxist theory.

Contemporary readers are here reminded of the great attention Marx and Engels paid to the socialist and labor movement in the United States, and their valuable advice to the American socialists.

Today's conflicts did not spring up ready-made overnight. The fight against the establishment has been going on for some generations and the "elders" laid the basis for some of today's confrontations which the youth, Black and white, pursue at today's levels and in their own style. The youth have, indeed, set the tempo for our times—a time when the fight for peace and decency and for the long abused rights of the Black people is being bitterly fought, and bitterly opposed.

The rebellious youth of today cannot but admire and respect the self-sacrifice, the ability, the honesty of De Leon. But I want to underline the need for well thought out, clarified theory, which takes into account the processes of social change around us. Revolutionary thought (though "left" or "far left") is sterile and useless when divorced from the mass movement. Nothing permanent can be won that way; there can be no permanent victory, separate and apart from the people.

It is also highly appropriate, in today's developments, that the "elders" appreciate the advice given by Lenin, in a letter written on February 15, 1905, to S. I. Gusev, in Petersburg, from exile in Geneva.

"I assure you that there is among us some kind of idiotic, philistine, lazy fear of young people. I implore you: fight this fear with all your strength."° That, too, is part of the fight against the establishment's status quo, for a better life for all of us.

I am especially indebted to Oakley Johnson, who researched important new material on Daniel De Leon's personal life. He initiated the idea of this book and we collaborated on writing the bibliography on Daniel De Leon which was published by

° *Letters of Lenin*, Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc. New York, 1937, p. 236.

AIMS. Oakley unselfishly gave me the benefit of his good advice and his research, during the years which it took to write the book.

Ann Reeve, my wife, an experienced journalist and writer, worked many long hours with me, discussing and editing the book, whipping it into shape and improving its quality.

I am also indebted to my daughter, Susan, who did research for me on the collection of De Leon papers in the library of the Wisconsin State Historical Society, at Madison, Wisconsin, and secured valuable information which was here used.

I want to acknowledge, with special thanks, the use of the fine collection of Socialist works and historical books in the several libraries of the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, which most courteously made their facilities available.

I also want to express gratitude to AIMS, and its director, Dr. Herbert Aptheker, for encouragement and advice.

CARL REEVE

CHAPTER I

DE LEON ENTERS THE LABOR MOVEMENT

In the Spring of 1886, Daniel De Leon was thirty-four years old, a lecturer in international law at Columbia University and looking forward to his appointment to a full professorship at that institution. It was at this time, in the midst of the serious labor struggles taking place throughout the country and the new political currents flowing from them, that De Leon first made public his stand for labor. His career then took the direction it was to follow until his death. In his lifetime, he was to influence thousands of Americans toward belief in Socialism and himself achieve a position in the history of American socialist theory shared by few.

The decade of the 80's was characterized by great expansion of industry with the formation of huge trusts. The industrialists were systematically acquiring the natural resources of the country—the oil, mines and land. The railroads and Standard Oil dominated the economy. Exorbitant freight rates were charged the farmers, who had no recourse, since the government refused to interfere. The rebelling farmers, in the next decade to join the Populist movement, exposed the fact that the bushel of wheat for which they received fifty cents, cost \$1.25 in New York City. The railroads also held a monopoly on the grain elevators.¹

Corruption and bribery flourished in national and state government. Political gangs, such as Tammany Hall, in New York City, were consolidating their hold on city governments.

The employers of labor were determined to maintain a program of ferocious exploitation. New machinery was rapidly increasing the productivity of labor. Joblessness increased. Long hours, meagre wages, child labor and the expanding reserve of unemployed workers, produced misery and resentment.

The Knights of Labor was still powerful. Although its national leadership discouraged strikes, its district assemblies *did* lead labor struggles. Defensive strikes taking place throughout the country were answered by increased violence on the part of the police and the Pinkertons and other private thugs recruited by the employers.

On May first, 1886, labor conducted a general strike for the eight-hour day.

In New York City, the workers were rebelling against miserable economic and political conditions. A movement was coalescing around Henry George, the proponent of the Single Tax, for political leadership of a new kind. The street-car workers struck. It was this strike which first called the class struggle to the attention of De Leon.

Olive M. Johnson, De Leon's long-time colleague in the leadership of the Socialist Labor Party, describes this turning point in his career. "The change in his life came about so suddenly that even he himself could not explain it . . . Columbia College was then on Madison Avenue, opposite St. Patrick's Cathedral. One day De Leon was sitting there together with a number of his colleagues. Suddenly there was a great noise—hells ringing, horns tooting. The street cars came in a row down the avenue. The workers had won. The group of professors hastened to the window and saw the parade go by. De Leon's colleagues expressed, during this procession, so much contempt and scorn and even threats against the workers that De Leon felt his blood boil. His resentment and anger were aroused and in this temper he wrote offering his support to Henry George, whom he had heard the workers were intending to nominate for mayor. This happened. But even then De Leon avowed he did not have the slightest intention of throwing himself into the labor movement."²

De Leon continued to concern himself with the problems of the people. He participated in the Henry George mayoralty campaign, publicly campaigned for the release of the Haymarket martyrs and joined the Utopian Socialist Nationalist movement which centered around the book *Looking Backward* by Edward Bellamy.

The national struggle for the eight-hour day was based in Chicago at this time. Albert Parsons was one of the anarchists and trade union leaders of the militant Chicago International Working Peoples Association. Other Chicago anarchists were also in leadership of factory struggles. Their philosophy was anarchism but they were also the outstanding leaders of the trade-union struggles for the immediate, practical demands of the workers. They led the mass strikes taking place for better conditions and the eight-hour day. Together with all the workers on the move, they were met with unprecedented violence by police and hired deputies. The call of the labor unions for a general strike on May 1, 1886, had been answered by the outpouring of many thousands of workers.

The workers of the McCormick Harvester Company had been on strike since March, as a result of the firing of union members. On May third, in a bloody clash of police and Pinkerton Company operatives against the strikers, one worker was shot to death and many were wounded, at least five seriously.

The unions called a protest meeting against police brutality on the evening of May 4th at Haymarket Square. The peaceful meeting was almost concluded when a large number of police invaded the square and advanced toward the speaker's platform. An unknown person threw a bomb. The police opened fire on the crowd and clubbed and trampled the people. One policeman and one bystander, at least, had been killed. Of the many wounded, five persons later died as a result of their injuries.³

A period of hysteria followed, whipped up by the employers, government and the press. Hundreds of trade-union leaders were arrested, charged with an "anarchist conspiracy." The "anarchy" cry against the unions was the red-baiting campaign of that day. Eight trade union leaders were charged with murder. Seven were sentenced to death.

The Haymarket case called forth a massive protest movement throughout the country, among professionals as well as labor.

Still teaching at Columbia University, De Leon again spoke out for labor.⁴ In September, 1887, he supported a joint resolution of District 49 of the Knights of Labor of New York and the New

York Central Labor Union, which charged that the sentencing of the Chicago labor leaders to death was a "disgrace" to the country and a violation of "liberty, free speech and justice." The resolution concluded that, "Under the misguiding and corrupting influence of prejudice and class hatred those men have been condemned without any conclusive evidence, as accessories to a crime, the principals of which, as well as the motive which may have actuated the same, are unknown."

At a united front meeting at Cooper Union, October 20, 1887, attended by nearly 4,000 people, De Leon said, "I come here deliberately and for the good name of our beloved country, that its proud record shall not be bloodstained by a judicial crime as the one contemplated in Chicago." Samuel Compers and P. J. McGuire were among the speakers at this meeting.⁵

On November 11, 1887, however, four trade-union leaders: Albert Parsons, August Spies, Adolph Fischer and George Engels, convicted of conspiracy and murder, were hanged as anarchist conspirators. Louis Lingg, also sentenced to death, had committed suicide in his cell. Samuel Fielden and Michael Schwab, finally, were sentenced to life imprisonment. Oscar Neebe was given a sentence of three years in prison. On June 26, 1893, the three were pardoned by Governor Altgeld, on the grounds that they were not legally convicted. Altgeld was heaped with abuse and his political career ended.

Howard Quint⁶ comments on the significance of De Leon's support of the Haymarket defendants: "De Leon was in less reputable surroundings when he spoke . . . before a mass meeting at Cooper Union protesting the death sentences of the anarchists. To support Henry George was out of character, though not completely damning for a Columbia faculty member. But to speak on behalf of men whom newspapers and public spokesmen vied in assigning to the gallows, was an indication of emotional instability and of unfitness to teach impressionable young students. It required courage and intellectual integrity for De Leon."

As a result of his activities, he became the victim of petty persecutions by the administration of Columbia University. When

the time came, he was not appointed to the promised professorship. De Leon left the university.

De Leon himself described this break, writing that he "was not dismissed, nor dropped. He left at the expiration of his second term because he did not care to continue in the same position, as was proposed to him, but demanded the permanent position of full professor as had been promised him, but which was withheld on the ground of his joining the labor movement in 1886." ⁷

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. For the exploitation of the farmers by the trusts, see Richard N. Current, T. Harry Williams and Frank Freidel, *American History, A Survey*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1965, p. 513.
2. Olive Johnson, *Daniel De Leon: American Socialist Pathfinder*, New York Labor News Co., 1923, pp. 10, 11.
3. Henry David, *History of the Haymarket Affair*, New York, Farrar and Rhinehart, Inc., 1936, pp. 190-206.
4. De Leon's activity on behalf of the Haymarket martyrs is not mentioned by Arnold Petersen or other Socialist Labor Party biographers of De Leon. Nor is there any mention of the Haymarket case in the two volumes *Daniel De Leon: Social Architect*, by Petersen.
5. Henry David, *History of the Haymarket Affair*, p. 412.
6. Howard H. Quint, *The Forging of American Socialism: Origins of the Modern Movement*, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 1953, p. 143.
7. Arnold Petersen, *Daniel De Leon. Social Architect*, Vol. I, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1941, p. 16.
See also *Life of Albert R. Parsons*, written 1889, 2nd edition 1903, published by Mrs. Lucy Parsons, Chicago; Alan Calmer, *Labor Agitator. The Story of Albert R. Parsons*, New York, International Publishers, 1937; P. S. Foner, ed., *Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs*, New York 1969, Humanities-A.I.M.S.

CHAPTER II

IN THE HENRY GEORGE
AND NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

The industrialists were greatly alarmed and Tammany Hall was shaken by the extent of support for Henry George in the New York mayoralty campaign of 1886, in which De Leon participated. This movement was a broad coalition of the unions, the foreign-born workers, middle-class liberals, intellectuals, professionals, single-taxers and socialists. Numerically and organizationally, the trade unions were the backbone of the movement.

An unsuccessful strike of beer-garden waiters and bartenders had resulted in an effective boycott movement by the unions and their sympathizers. The waiters and bartenders, organized into the Brewery Workers Union, were haled into court and fined for violating an injunction. Five leaders of the Central Labor Union were sentenced to Sing Sing prison.

The Henry George campaign was the high point of the answer of labor and the people to the menace of a growing aggressive oligarchy of wealth.

The process of concentration of wealth and power which had advanced rapidly from the 70's, was to continue beyond the Spanish-American War of 1898 and on into the first decades of the 1900's. Monopolies were being built; the Wall Street financial interests, led by J. P. Morgan & Co. were dominating the industries. John D. Rockefeller and his aides were establishing the Standard Oil trust; J. P. Morgan and Co. were taking over the steel industry.¹

The boycott case was the breaking point for labor in New York. The Central Labor Union, in response to the anti-labor action of the courts, turned toward political activity. Member unions

in which German workers predominated, were composed, in large part, of refugees who had fled Germany because of autocratic anti-socialist laws instituted by Bismarck. These unions, naturally, were socialist influenced. In addition, the progressive currents flowing in the Central Labor Union came from membership representing the Irish independence movement.

The Central Labor Union issued a program, calling for "The concentration of all unions into one solid body, for the purpose of assisting each other in all struggles, political or industrial—to resist every attempt of the ruling classes directed against our liberties, and to extend our fraternal hand to the wage earners of our land and to all nations of the globe."²

This "class" philosophy was fundamentally not acceptable to Henry George. Although a member of the printers' union and the Knights of Labor, he was not a socialist nor a believer in the existence of the class struggle. His theory was that once speculation and profiteering in land were controlled, the evils of poverty could be overcome. He denied the concept of exploitation in the factory for capitalist profit. Henry George did not want to overthrow the capitalist system of production, but to reform it by curbing land speculation. His work, *Progress and Poverty*, written in 1879, presenting the Single Tax theories, became a best seller, in a period when many troubled people were groping for an answer to the rise of violent, predatory capitalism.

On July 11, 1886, at a meeting of the Central Labor Union, a committee was appointed to consider plans for the establishment of a labor party. Their efforts resulted in a conference held August 5th which was attended by 402 delegates, representing 165 labor organizations, with a membership of 50,000. A motion was passed, calling for independent political action by labor. The Independent Labor Party was formed.³ Henry George was asked to run for Mayor and, reluctantly, agreed.

The Socialist Labor Party was critical of Henry George's Single Tax theories and, in turn, Henry George was suspicious of labor and the socialists. In the 1886 campaign, however, they marched together, in spite of their "uneasiness" with each other.

Middle-class liberals and many professionals, against Tam-

many Hall corruption and for "clean government," joined the movement. George's economic theories had support, largely, among such middle-class liberals and professionals.

A nominating convention was held September 23, 1886 where Henry George was nominated by a vote of 360 to 49. Later in the campaign, he was endorsed by Samuel Compers and Terence Powderly, heads of the AFL and Knights of Labor, respectively.

On October 1st, at a Henry George mass meeting attended by several thousand persons, Daniel De Leon appeared as a speaker. Father McGlynn, a Catholic priest who was later excommunicated for his support of George, also spoke. De Leon was to participate throughout the entire Henry George campaign, working primarily with the unions and the socialists. His speech is the first recorded where De Leon took up working-class issues and spoke as a member of a united front. Reported by the *New York Tribune* of October 2nd, De Leon said George would "give us government of the people, for the people and by the people..." He emphasized the need for more democracy, clean government and attention to the economic needs of the people.⁴

De Leon's speech, an honest attempt to improve the lot of the people of New York, was still the speech of a reformer, not yet attacking the root causes of poverty.

De Leon charged: "We have hitherto been ruled in this city by a small minority that have no interest whatever in our welfare. They are the professional politicians whose headquarters are in the rum and grog shops, with points of vantage in the slums of our city, recruiting their strength from the criminal classes."

He directed that forceful and ironic attack which was later to become identified with his personality, against the rich who prey on "the unfortunate, crushed masses." He tipped his hat to Henry George's Single Tax theory: "The large landowner is the worst element in this city."

A daily paper, *The Leader*, was issued by the Henry George movement; it soon reached a circulation of over 50,000. S. Schevitz, a Socialist, was editor. "Tailboard" campaigning, from wagons throughout the streets of the city, became a form of daily electioneering. A "small army" of speakers was organized. Many times the

two activists, Samuel Compers and Daniel De Leon, led the oratorical talent at the meetings.⁵

On October 30, more than 20,000 New Yorkers paraded in support of George's candidacy.

Tammany Hall's record was a regime of rule by fraud, corruption, bribery and, where expedient, violence, and, most importantly, traffic in buying and selling legislation.⁶ Its candidate, Abram S. Hewitt, a wealthy iron manufacturer, "red-baited" George, raising the labor issue and the support of the socialists. In reply to these charges, George denied the class nature of the movement.⁷

The wealthy of New York City concentrated their support behind Hewitt. The prize was great—New York City—the seat of the country's financial and industrial power, the largest city in the United States. If Henry George were to win, there would be reverberations in the entire nation.

A stream of demagoguery, red-baiting and anti-labor diatribes flowed from the pulpits, the press and the street corners. But the solidarity of labor and its allies in the campaign remained firm.

On election day, George received 68,000 counted votes, Hewitt 90,000 and 60,000 votes were totalled for Theodore Roosevelt, the Republican candidate. There were many observers who thought that Henry George was counted out by Tammany Hall, through stealing votes and falsifying the election returns.

After the election, the labor unions and Henry George's disciples jockeyed for position in the movement. Rather than carrying the powerful united movement forward on a common minimum program, the Socialist Labor Party and labor pressed hard for acceptance by the movement of their policies. On the other hand, Henry George, influenced also by increasing "red-baiting" in the press, acted to clear his skirts of the pro-socialist and pro-labor charges against him. The movement disintegrated.

On November 6, 1886, a mass meeting, called by Henry George to consider post-election strategy, was held at Cooper Union. It was decided to establish a party on a permanent basis, with the name "Progressive Democracy." Three days later, the district organizers of the Central Labor Union held their own meeting.

They rejected the name "Progressive Democracy" (as well as the name "Land and Labor" also suggested by the Henry George group) and decided the party should be called the "United Labor Party." This became the official name of the movement. On January 6, 1887, the county convention held by the Central Labor Union, attended by 340 delegates from all assembly districts, voted to organize the United Labor Party in each district. The platform for the United Labor Party was confirmed. Included was a plank for nationalization of industries.

The Committee on Organization of the United Labor Party included three men who were later to form a triumvirate to lead the Socialist Labor Party—Hugo Vogt, Lucien Sanial and Daniel De Leon. Vogt, particularly, directed De Leon toward the works of Marx and Engels and to Socialism.

Henry George's own Committee of Three, which continued to advocate "Progressive Democracy," organized its own Land and Labor Clubs, which included wage earners, but were led by intellectuals. George also founded his own newspaper, the *Standard*, and six months later, in June, 1887, attacked the word "labor" in the name of the party, saying it had "narrow associations and would handicap the new movement with the notion that it was merely a class movement."

The split finally took place at the State Convention of the United Labor Party, in Syracuse, August 17, 1887. The three issues raised for inclusion in the program by George were (1) taxation of land values (the Single Tax); (2) currency reform; (3) government ownership of railways. The socialists and the unions expressed their criticism of the omission of labor demands. Although as late as July 30, George had said, "I neither claim nor repudiate the name socialist," at the Syracuse convention, George attacked the socialists. "We cannot afford to tolerate," he said, "Greenback, Irish, German or Socialist factions . . . We must stand for American ideas as American citizens."⁸ He succeeded in expelling the socialists on the grounds that they represented a political party.

Within the Central Labor Union, the majority of the districts wanted to retain the word "Labor" in the name of the Henry

George movement, as well as labor demands. The unions were split, however, on the issue of barring the socialists from the new political party. A tie vote kept the socialist issue off the floor of the GLU.

The Socialist Labor Party finally proposed a reconciliation with Henry George on the basis of a return to the status quo. But it was too late. Henry George remained irreconcilable. He said "The question . . . may as well, *since the socialists have raised it*, be settled now."

The split adversely affected his subsequent strength. In a year's time, in the next election, in his campaign for Secretary of State, Henry George's vote fell from 68,000 in New York City, to 37,000 on a state scale. The Central Labor Union's effort to set up a new Labor Party also failed. In 1889, Henry George supported Grover Cleveland for President.

Two factors had brought on the premature death of this powerful coalition. (1) The growing hostility of Henry George to the labor and socialist movement, and (2) the sectarian approach of the German socialists.

Throughout this period, Frederick Engels was addressing numerous letters to American socialists, pleading for a broader approach by them to the Henry George movement. S. Schevitz, editor of the *Leader*, was specifically criticized by Engels for not integrating the socialists with the broad American class struggles.

De Leon was surrounded by sectarianism in this first major labor venture, which influenced him toward suspicion against broad united fronts and the theoretical confusion of middle-class leaders.

In one of his numerous references to sectarianism in the Henry George movement, Engels wrote to Florence Kelley Wischnewetzky- December 28, 1886. He replied, in response to her request that he criticize Henry George's policies in his American Preface to *The Conditions of the Working Class in England In 1844* (to be published in English in the United States)* that he would

* Florence Kelley Wischnewetzky received Engels' permission to translate this work into English for publication in the United States. Formerly an SLP member, she became one of the country's outstanding social reformers,

refer to George's "land schemes." But: "It is far more important that the movement should spread, proceed harmoniously, take root and embrace as much as possible the whole American proletariat than that it should start and proceed from the beginning on theoretically perfect correct lines . . . I consider that many of the Germans there have made a grievous mistake when they tried in the face of a mighty and glorious movement not of their creation, to make of their imported and not always understood theory a kind of *alleinseligmachendes* (necessary to salvation) dogma and to keep aloof from any movement which did not accept that dogma."⁹

Engels' letter to Mrs. Wischnewetzky of January 27, 1887 was in a similar vein.¹⁰

In De Leon's later statements on the Henry George movement, this writer found no reference by him (or other Socialist Labor Party leaders) to Engels' attempt to keep the mass united front movement alive. De Leon must have seen Engels' 1887 Preface to *The Condition of the Workingclass In England in 1844*¹¹ which was an important document on the Marxist approach to the problems of American labor. But De Leon never referred to it in his writings or speeches. Besides urging work within the George movement, Engels presented to the pre-De Leon Socialist Labor Party, and the working class as a whole, a rounded platform for improving socialist policies, particularly in mass work. He also described the theoretical differences between the socialists and Henry George.

"To Henry George," he wrote, in part, "the expropriation of the mass of the people from the land is the great and universal cause of the splitting up of the people into rich and poor." This, he said, was not historically correct.

"It was the development of capitalist production, of modern industry and agriculture on a large scale which perpetuated it [modern working class], increased it, and shaped it into a distinct class."

responsible for laws against child labor and fighter for improved conditions for working women and against slum housing and anti-labor laws. She remained a socialist throughout her life.

To Marxists, land is to be held "in common and for common account and the same with all other means of social production, mines, railways, factories, etc. Henry George would confine himself to letting it out to individuals as at present, merely regulating its distribution and applying the rents for public, instead of, as at present, for private purposes. What the Socialists demand, implies a total revolution of the whole system of social production; what Henry George demands, leaves the present mode of social production untouched." ¹²

In later years, Daniel De Leon evaluated the Henry George movement as a completely negative experience. He saw no missed opportunities in the coalition, and confined his conclusions to a general condemnation of Henry George's policies. In "Reform or Revolution," a lecture delivered in 1896, De Leon said, "A falsely based movement is like a lie and a lie cannot survive." The Henry George movement was "another of these charlatan booms, that only helped still more to dispirit people in the end. The Single Tax, with its half-antiquated, half idiotic reasoning, took the field . . . Again a semi-economic lie proved a broken reed to lean on. Down came Humpty Dumpty . . ."

After the break-up of the Henry George movement, De Leon interested himself in the Nationalists, founded by Edward Bellamy. Again, it was a hook, *Looking Backward*, printed in 1887, written by Bellamy, a well-to-do Bostonian and Utopian Socialist, which initiated a movement.

The novel, which sold hundreds of thousands of copies, depicted a Utopian Socialist society, in the year 2,000, when there was no exploitation or private profit. Bellamy, like so many others of this period, was appalled at the gulf between the rich captains of industry and the masses of destitute poor. When Bellamy's leading character woke up in the year 2,000, he found that while he had slept for more than a hundred years, the "set of private persons and irresponsible corporations" had been deprived of the ownership of the trusts. These had been taken over by a "single syndicate representing the people, to be conducted in the common interest for the common profit."

The American Nationalists believed that by describing the

ideal, profitless socialist society, and opposing it to what existed in the capitalist world, socialism would obtain. People would, automatically, choose the socialist system because it was better. Their program called for "a gradual reform process" using "rational and peaceful means." The attainment of Socialism was divorced from the processes of historical development and from systems of production. Mass movements reflecting the class struggle were overlooked. Particularly underestimated was the powerful influence of the capitalist state in maintaining the status quo. Bellamy's followers sought to remedy capitalism's evils by legislating nationalization of the functions of production and distribution.

De Leon joined a Nationalist club and wrote articles for the magazine of the Bellamy movement, the *Nationalist*. The movement was Utopian and visionary, but it served De Leon as a bridge leading to the scientific socialism of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. In fact, thousands of socialists first learned of socialism through Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and the Utopian Nationalist movement.

During this period, De Leon was reading Marx and Engels intensively, pursuing the study of socialist economics. An early allusion to Marx was made in an article which he wrote on President James Madison for the *Nationalist* of August, 1889. This article displays his groping toward valid theory with which to remedy the ill society.

"Karl Marx stops in the midst of his analyses of the law of values to render tribute to the genius of Aristotle for discovering in the expression of the value of commodities the central truth of political economy." ¹³ De Leon pointed to Madison's discernment in foreseeing that American society would change, so that the propertyless class would become the majority instead of a small minority.

"He described in the not distant future a serious conflict between the class with and the class without property; the fated collapse of the system of suffrage he had helped to rear; and consequently the distinct outlines of a grave national problem." The economic question was involved, De Leon said, as well as

the question of suffrage, and Madison "vainly labored to find in the various methods of checks and balances an answer that was either adequate to the threatened emergency or satisfactory to his judgment."

De Leon's conclusion shows that he was still within the theoretical orbit of Utopian socialism. "That the wisdom of the revolutionary fathers and their teachings are not lost upon their successors, the appearance and growth of the Nationalist movement demonstrate."

In the article, "Karl Marx," written a year before his death, De Leon describes those beginning days in the Nationalist movement as being the first "crude" steps toward scientific socialism.

In the Nationalist movement, De Leon said, there were "two characteristics—the distinct note of Revolution and glaring crudity of thought." He went on: "The Nationalist Movement was the connecting link between the crude, though Revolutionary Past, and the Revolutionary but no longer crude Present. The difference consisted in the Marxism that stamps the present."¹⁴

Frederick Sorge, during the time De Leon was in the Nationalist movement, had won the praise of Engels for articles he had written in the *Nationalist*. Sorge disagreed with the then viewpoint of De Leon and examined the Utopian and un-Marxian character of the movement.¹⁵ Sorge and Engels compared the Nationalists to the Fabians of England.

In 1890, De Leon made the move which was to influence the rest of his life. He joined the Socialist Labor Party.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. For the story of the trusts, see Gustavus Myers, *The History of the Great American Fortunes*, The Modern Library, New York, 1907, 1936 edition, Random House.
2. Charles A. Barker, *Henry George*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 458.
3. Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. II, New York, International Publishers, 1955, p. 119 ff.
4. Arnold Petersen, *Daniel De Leon, Social Architect*, Vol. I, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1941, pp. 113-116.
5. *Labor and American Politics*, Edited by Charles M. Rehmus and Doris B. McLaughlin, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1967, p. 81.
6. For more on Tammany Hall, see *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens*,

New York, Harcourt Brace & Co., 1931, Vol. 1, Part 2, "Seeing New York First," pp. 169-247.

7. John R. Commons, et al., *History of Labor in the United States*, Vol. II, New York, MacMillan Co., 1921, p. 452.
8. Barker, *Henry George*, p. 496.
9. Marx and Engels, *Letters to Americans 1848-1895*, New York, International Publishers, 1953, p. 166.
10. Ibid. p. 167, Engels' letter of January 27, 1887, to Florence Kelley Wischnewetzky, says, on socialist theory, "The less it is drilled into the Americans from the outside and the more they test it through their own experience—with the help of the Germans—the deeper will it pass into their flesh and blood."
11. (Printed as an appendix to *Letters to Americans 1848-1895*, pp. 285-291.)
12. Marx had written to Sorge, June 30, 1881, relative to Henry George (*Selected Correspondence 1846-1895*, New York, International Publishers, p. 396): "...How did it happen that in the United States, where relatively, that is in comparison with civilized Europe, the land was accessible to the great mass of the people and to a certain degree (again relatively) still is, capitalist economy and the corresponding enslavement of the working class have developed more rapidly and shamelessly than in any other country! On the other hand, George's book, like the sensation it has made with you, is significant because it is a first, if unsuccessful attempt at emancipation from the orthodox political economy..."
13. Arnold Petersen, *The Voice of Madison*, Reprinted in *The Constitution of the United States*, New York Labor News Co., 1963, p. 52. Also *James Madison and Karl Marx. Two Articles by Daniel De Leon*, New York, National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, 1920.
14. Daniel De Leon, *Karl Marx. Weekly People*, May 10, 1913. Reprinted by NEC, SLP, 1918.
15. Marx and Engels, *Letters to Americans*. Letter dated October 12, 1889, p. 219.
Also see *Henry Demarest Lloyd and the Empire of Reform*, by Chester McArthur Destler, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963. Also *Florence Kelley, The Making of a Social Pioneer*, by Dorothy Rose Blumberg, New York, Augustus M. Kelley, 1966. Chapters 5 and 6.

CHAPTER III

DE LEON REMOLDS THE S.L.P.

Within two or three years after he joined the Socialist Labor Party, during the decade of the '90s the only socialist organization in the country, De Leon was its undisputed leader.

During the first half of the decade, at express train speed, monopolistic control of industry and government developed. Big business constantly eliminated competition by price-cutting and absorption of smaller scale industry, government "gifts" obtained through bribery and corrupting officials, by securing secret rebates and kickbacks on freight rates from the railroads, which were playing a key part in the economy.¹

In 1860, the railroads had built 30,000 miles of track. In 1890 there were 163,000 miles, and in 1900, 193,000 miles of track had been laid. The railroads received free gifts of millions of acres of land along their rights of way, in addition to outright money grants of millions of dollars.

By 1900, five transcontinental railroads had been built. The dominance of finance capital over the trusts was evidenced by the forming of the U. S. Steel Corporation by J. P. Morgan & Co. Soon Wall Street controlled all the largest industries.²

Henry Demarest Lloyd, alarmed at the completely unscrupulous methods of Standard Oil, in his *Wealth and Common-wealth*, documented the fraud, thievery, extortion, sharp practices and anti-labor violence used in building this monopoly.

Lloyd, appalled by the predatory march of the trusts, wrote, "The people of America are in full retreat before them—and they will be massacred." He also added "The working class is in undisguised revolt."³

"Over-production," speed-up, invention of bigger and more efficient labor-saving machines, new electricity-producing dynamos, rapid expansion of production capacities, the squeezing out of the small businessmen and of competition, hastened a severe economic crisis. From 1893 to 1897 large armies of unemployed accumulated. In spite of concerted union-smashing attacks in this decade, the unions established a permanent position on the American labor scene. The AFL retained its 275,000 membership. In the year 1894 alone, more than 750,000 workers went on strike.

Severe labor battles took place in the basic industries. One of these was the Homestead Strike. Carnegie Steel Company ordered that a wage cut be included in the new union contract, to be effective July 1, 1892. The workers at Homestead, Pennsylvania refused and the Carnegie Company locked them out. A large force of fully armed Pinkertons, strikebreakers and sluggers, many of them with criminal records, were sent against the steel-union pickets. The employers built a fifteen-foot-high wire fence around the factory. During the night of July 5, thousands of strikers met the Pinkerton army which was trying to disembark from barges on the river at Homestead. The Pinkertons opened fire and a battle took place in which three Pinkertons and at least nine strikers were killed.⁴ The Pinkertons were driven out of town. The Governor of Pennsylvania retaliated by sending 8,000 national guardsmen to Homestead and the strike was finally broken.⁵ This first large steel strike marked a milestone in American labor's resistance to unbridled terror.

Another large strike of the period was led by Eugene V. Debs of Terre Haute, Indiana. Debs, secretary of the Locomotive Firemen's Railway Brotherhood, resigned his post, angered at the lack of solidarity in the Brotherhoods and the refusal of the Engineers to support the unskilled workers. He concentrated on organizing the American Railway Union, an industrial union, which by 1894 had 150,000 members.

On May 11, 1894, the Pullman workers outside Chicago struck. Under Debs' leadership, a month later, all ARU members refused to handle Pullman cars. The strike spread throughout the Chicago area. The General Managers' Association (the railroad owners'

organization) declared war. An armed force of U.S. deputy marshals was sworn in and placed at the disposal of the employers. Debs and other union leaders refused to recognize an injunction issued by the courts and he and the other leaders were jailed for contempt. Federal troops were sent into the area by the Democratic president, Grover Cleveland. The strike was defeated, no small factor being the fact that the AFL craft unions refused to give it their support.

The strike marked the appearance of Debs on the national scene as a leader of American workers. He was at this time a Populist and Utopian socialist.

The strong Populist movement developed as the result of overpowering economic pressure on the farmers by the trusts. Many socialists and Populists became leaders, in 1894, in the struggle for jobs for the three million unemployed.⁶

In the face of fierce strikes, the farmers' movement and the upsurge of the unemployed, the Socialist Labor Party was neither unified nor ideologically tempered to play an important role on a national scale.

Marx and Engels, from the end of the Civil War until Engels' death on August 6, 1895, had attempted to unite the heterogeneous socialist groups of the United States into one national organization committed to scientific socialism. The First International (the International Workingmen's Association) was formed in England in 1864, with Marx and Engels the leaders.⁷ During the years of its existence, it exerted considerable influence on the socialists in the United States.

William H. Sylvis, head of the Molders' Union and of the National Labor Union, which he helped found in 1866, maintained correspondence with Marx, Engels and the First International. The National Labor Union reached its high point in 1869 and then dwindled, due largely to its confused program.⁸

Isolated groups, affiliated with the First International, existed in a number of cities in the '70s and '80s. The program of the Commonwealth Club of New York City (Frederick Sorge its leading spirit) was closest to the concepts of scientific Marxian socialism. The first convention of the First International in the United

States, held on July 6, 1872 in New York City, was attended by delegates from 22 sections, the majority immigrant Germans. The level of understanding of Marxist principles by the groups was varied. A second, broader convention, was held in Philadelphia on April 11, 1874. The diverse representation included followers of Robert Owen and other Utopian Socialists. Also present were anarchists, influenced by Proudhon and Bakunin, as well as syndicalists who were against use of the ballot and election activities. The strongest groups, organizationally, were the Lassalleans, who were against the organization of the workers into unions. The discord over ideology was intense.

The 1876 organizing convention of the Workingmen's Party in Philadelphia drew its main strength from the Marxist forces of the First International and from the Lassallean groups. A year later it was renamed the Socialist Labor Party.*

Three thousand members were represented. Frederick Sorge and Otto Weydemeyer led the Marxist forces. The Lassalleans, led by Adolph Strasser, A. Gabriel and P. J. McGuire, included the Illinois Labor Party and the Social Democratic Party of New York.

Basically, a Marxian program was adopted, with heated discussion on the need for economic struggles, such as the eight-hour day campaign and the formation of mass unions.

While defeated as to political program, the Lassalleans secured the majority of the national committee and elected Philip Van Patten, one of their own, secretary. In the course of violent labor struggles the party grew. By 1879 it had 10,000 members in 25 states. The economic turmoil led also to the formation, in 1878, of the National Greenback Labor Party, its platform basically middle class, with the main plank monetary reform. Its program contained labor demands in some states, but on the whole, the leadership did not accept the class struggle for inclusion in its program. In 1878 over a million votes were polled for the party. Fifteen candidates were elected to Congress.

In 1880, the SLP endorsed the Greenback Party candidates.

* For a short time, it was Socialistic Labor Party.

At this time, the Lassalleans were in control of the organization. A reformist program of gradual evolution to socialism was adopted. The Lassalleans wanted to vote Socialism into power and legislate, as an interim step, state-aided cooperatives. In 1881, the anarchists, centered in Chicago, led by Alhert Parsons and August Spies, split from the SLP and formed the Revolutionary Socialist Labor Party. Johann Most, the Bakuninist anarchist, joined this movement for a time, and became one of its leaders. In 1883, a larger anarchist and syndicalist convention, which formed, in Chicago, the International Working Peoples Association, condemned political action and use of the ballot. These Chicago anarcho-syndicalists inserted into their program, the words, "The International recognizes in the trade unions the Embryonic group of the future society," a program later adopted by Daniel De Leon.

The SLP, after this split in 1883, counted only 1,500 members, and the anarchist "International" of Chicago claimed 7,000. After the Haymarket persecutions, in 1887, the anarchist International dissolved, in the face of the police terror and press hysteria against it.

The SLP again gained membership. The party still was heterogeneous as to ideology—containing Marxians, right-wing opportunists who underestimated the role of the existing trade unions, the sectarians and the syndicalists.⁹

In 1889, the year before De Leon joined the SLP, there was still another split, over tactics. The new leadership was closer to Marxism and Lucien Sanial became an influential leader.

In 1890, De Leon entered the party and worked with Sanial and Hugo Vogt to establish a Marxist party from the confused, fragmented socialist movement.

There was not, in a real sense, a national organization. Discipline and unity were very weak.

Frederick Engels evaluated the party in 1887 in his Preface to the *Condition of the Workingclass in England in 1844* (American edition),¹⁰ at a time when there were more than 70 sections—scattered and not operating as a unified body. It "is a party but in name," Engels wrote, "for nowhere in America has it, up to

now, been able actually to take a stand as a political party. It is, moreover, to a certain extent, foreign to America, having until lately, been made up almost exclusively by German immigrants, using their own language and for the most part little conversant with the common language of the country. But if it came from a foreign stock, it came, at the same time, armed with the experience earned during long years of class-struggle in Europe, and with an insight into the general conditions of working class emancipation far superior to that hitherto gained by American workingmen . . . This party is called upon to play a very important part in the movement. But in order to do so, they will have to doff every remnant of their foreign garb. They will have to become out and out American. They cannot expect the Americans to come to them; they, the minority and the immigrants, must go to the Americans, who are the vast majority and the natives . . ."

De Leon attempted to carry out some of the changes which Engels recommended. His impact on the SLP was fundamental, hard-hitting and of basic significance. His objective was to change the Socialist Labor Party in the following areas: (1) strengthening of the party organizationally with discipline and centralization, the minority bowing to the will of the majority; (2) transforming the SLP into a national organization, through national organizing tours, a national election campaign and a national campaign for the newly consolidated *Weekly People*; (3) eliminating reformists, opportunists, corrupt and career-minded members and un-Marxian leaders; (4) grounding the SLP and the American workers as a whole in the principles of scientific socialism by publishing and popularizing the Marxian classics; (5) making the *Weekly People* a real working class newspaper.¹¹

Giving attention to the need for unity, centralization and tighter organization, De Leon summarized his ideas on what constitutes a viable socialist party, in his address "Reform or Revolution" delivered in Boston in 1896. Many of his concepts were similar to those worked out by Lenin's Bolshevik Communist Party in Russia.

On organization, "The modern revolutionist, i.e. the Socialist, must in the first place . . . necessarily work in organization, with

all that that implies. In this you have the first characteristic that distinguishes the revolutionist from the reformer; the reformer spurns organization. His symbol is 'Five Sore Fingers on a Hand—far apart from one another'—no principle is superior to the movement or organization that puts it and upholds it in the field . . . The revolutionist recognizes that the organization that is propelled by correct principles is as the boiler that must hold the steam, or the steam will amount to nothing . . .

"Just the reverse of the reformer, who will ever be seen mocking at science, the revolutionist will not make a distinction between the organization and the principle. He will say 'The principle and the organization are one.'" ¹²

De Leon stressed discipline and unity in the party. "The modern revolutionist knows that in order to accomplish results or to promote principle there must be unity of action. He knows that if we do not go in a body and hang together, we are bound to hang separately. Hence, you will ever see the revolutionary submit to the will of the majority . . . you will never find the revolutionary putting himself above organization." ¹³

De Leon's concept of centralism in party organization was aimed toward uniting the isolated socialist groups into a functioning body, with all groups travelling in the same direction, with the same principles and goals. "The highest individual freedom must go hand in hand with collective freedom; and none such is possible without a central directing authority." ¹⁴

In *Party Ownership of the Press*, articles by De Leon combined as a pamphlet, he enlarged on the differences with reformists on the structure of the SLP. The article "Signposts" in this pamphlet, dated April 2, 1899, reflected on the Socialist Labor Party as it had been when De Leon entered it, nine years earlier. The loose, disorganized and undisciplined party of that time, he felt, had laid the foundation for the current problems with the Volkszeitung Publishing Association, which adamantly refused to carry out party policy.

De Leon's fight against the Volkszeitung group reflected his determination to secure a centralized party. His struggle was against the opportunism of embracing, as the sole method of

socialist activity, a gradual "voting in" of socialism, without extra-parliamentary struggle. He polemized against the careerists and "pie card artists" whose social life took precedence over the daily struggles and political work.

Meetings often took place in the back rooms of saloons. There were no national candidates put forward on the socialist ticket and no effective election campaigns. De Leon decried the influence of German politicians and German bourgeois organizations on these socialists. The Volkszeitung, for instance, printed advertisements for bourgeois candidates, as a source of income for the paper. ¹⁵

De Leon charged, "By degrees the Party [German party groups] shrank into social clubs, singing and drinking and card playing societies with an occasional outing when a member died and periodically celebrations in which thrilling speeches were delivered by themselves to themselves." ¹⁶

"More or less labored articles [in the Volkszeitung] did no harm and an occasional good word for the then misnomer of a Socialist Labor Party was profitable . . . to help the paper raise funds . . . but actual politics, the putting up of an SLP ticket and thus 'hostilizing' customers and advertisers (among the latter of whom political candidates of the capitalist parties appeared not infrequently), that was a horse of a different color." ¹⁷

De Leon himself was active in SLP election campaigns from his first days in the organization. He worked energetically to present the socialist program to the people; ran as candidate for Congress and other offices; spoke; wrote and organized.

One conclusion De Leon drew from his experience with the Volkszeitung group was that the party itself, must own and control its press, not individuals nor independent organizations, which might, at a given moment, start fighting the party's policies.

De Leon thus summarized the progress made in the decade of his membership:

"The year 1899 is ten years later than '89. The Socialist Labor Party is no longer a social club, located mainly in New York. Within the last ten years its inspired apostles and its press have,

with words of fire, cast abroad the rejuvenating spark, kindled the flame of class-consciousness in America, and planted the standard of the Social Revolution in the land. The SLP has become a Party, it has leaped the boundaries of the city and state; it has spread out north, south and west, and now extends from ocean to ocean, honored, respected, feared, over 80,000 strong."¹⁸

Rudolph Katz, a close co-worker of De Leon, tells of De Leon's struggle to force the SLP to get out onto the arena of American political life in its own name.¹⁹

"In 1890," he writes, "a dignified [election] campaign was conducted in New York City by the SLP and brought good results. Five thousand votes were cast for the mayoralty candidate, August Delebar. De Leon was an active participant in that campaign. Hall as well as street meetings were held, at many of which he was the principal speaker. Those who wanted a 'party of propaganda' only (the Volkszeitung group among them) were no longer listened to. De Leon's presence in the party councils changed the situation considerably and his personal activity and participation in the campaign inspired the membership and created not only confidence but courage and enthusiasm . . . Daniel De Leon, coming as he did, from Columbia University, a lecturer on international law . . . did not think it was below his dignity to speak at street corners; . . . did not offer apologies for the existence of the SLP."²⁰

De Leon lectured every Sunday morning in the 22nd Assembly District of New York, where he lived, and was a candidate for the Assembly in 1890. After the 1890 campaign, it was decided to issue the *Weekly People*, with Lucien Sanial as editor. The *Workman's Advocate* was consolidated with *The People*. De Leon was made associate editor. In 1891, he was sent on a national tour to consolidate the party. In the Fall of that year, he ran for governor of New York State for the SLP and received 13,000 votes. De Leon was promoted to editor of the *People* at this time and held the post until his death, in May, 1914.

De Leon tackled "the big job of making the *People* * not a

* From July 15, 1900 to late in 1913, the *People* was printed daily as the *Daily People* and edited by Daniel De Leon.

'family paper' filled with plate matter . . . but a paper filled with original matter . . . an organ of a great movement, a movement whose task it is to accomplish the greatest revolution which has yet taken place in the history of mankind."²¹

With De Leon determinedly insisting, the SLP ran a national election campaign in 1892. Simon Wing, of Massachusetts, and Charles H. Matchett, electrician and a trade union member, of New York, were nominated for President and Vice-President respectively. The SLP ticket received over 21,000 votes in this significant campaign marking the first time the socialist movement entered the national political election scene.

The tenets of socialism were thus, by De Leon's influence, brought to the people of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Connecticut, where the SLP appeared on the ballot. A precedent had been established. "After the campaign, in 1892, SLP sections began to sprout up everywhere and Daniel De Leon was hailed by all as the man to raise high the banner of socialism in America . . ."²²

His hammering out of principles of organization and his insistence that his party speak out to the American workers on its fundamental principles, through election campaigns, qualitatively changed American socialist activities.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. Caro Lloyd, *Henry Demarest Lloyd, A Biography*, Two Vols., New York, G. P. Putnam & Sons, London, The Knickerbocker Press, 1912, Vol. I, Chapter 4, p. 58; Chapter 10, p. 181.
2. Richard N. Current, T. Harry Williams, Frank Freidel, *American History, A Survey*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1965, p. 496.
3. *Henry Demarest Lloyd, A Biography*, p. 126.
4. Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. II, New York, International Publishers, 1955, pp. 209-210. Estimates of the number killed vary. Anthony Bimba (*The History of the American Working Class*, New York, International Publishers, 1927, 1937, p. 214) says at least half a dozen men on both sides were killed and a number seriously wounded.
5. Anthony Bimba, *The History of the American Working Class*, 210-214.
6. See chapter on the Populist Movement, this book.
7. The First Congress of the First International took place in London, September 25, 1865.
8. Charlotte Todes, *William H. Sylvester and The National Labor Union*, New York, International Publishers, 1942, p. 109.

9. William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, Chapter II, New York, International Publishers, 1952, p. 62, Also Anthony Bimba, pp. 143-165.
 10. Marx and Engels, *Letters to Americans*, Appendix, New York, International Publishers, 1953, pp. 285-291.
 11. Daniel De Leon, *Reform or Revolution*, from a speech delivered in Boston, January 26, 1896, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1896. (Reprinted more than a dozen times from 1899.)
 12. *Socialist Landmarks. Four Addresses by De Leon*, "Reform or Revolution," New York Labor News Co., 1952, p. 50.
 13. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
 14. *Ibid.*
 15. Daniel De Leon, *Party Ownership of the Press*, New York Labor News Company, 1931, p. 25.
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 24 (Editorial in *The People*, July 23, 1899.)
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
 19. Rudolph Katz, *Daniel De Leon. The Man and His Work*. "With De Leon Since '89," New York, NEC, SLP, 1934. (First Edition, 1919), Book II, p. 8.
 20. *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 9.
 21. *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 11.
 22. *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 13.
- See also Norman J. Ware, *The Labor Movement in the United States, 1860-1890*, New York, Vintage Books, Alfred A. Knopf and Random House, 1929, First Vintage edition 1964.

CHAPTER IV

WORKING IN THE KNIGHTS OF LABOR

During the years 1890 to 1895, De Leon attempted to work within both the AFL and the Knights of Labor. He joined the Knights of Labor and soon strongly influenced that organization. Lucien Sanial, guided by De Leon, worked with the Socialist Labor Party forces in the AFL.

The national leadership of both organizations was class collaborationist, and in the case of the Knights of Labor, was already anti-labor.

Engels, in 1887, had named the Knights of Labor as the most important organization of the workers then in existence in America: "...Whatever be their origin and history, whatever their shortcomings and little absurdities, whatever their platform and their constitution, here they are, the work of practically the whole of American wage workers, the only national bond that holds them together, that makes their strength felt to themselves not less than to their enemies and that fills them with the proud hope of future victories..."¹

De Leon believed the leadership of both Knights of Labor and AFL was so corrupt and conservative that quick national control by the socialists was necessary. Therefore, he directed the campaign of the SLP, primarily, towards rapid takeover of the national organizations, rather than work within the sections and assemblies.

Henry Kuhn, who was elected secretary of the SLP in 1891, and was a co-worker of De Leon for many years, said of this "boring from within" period: "Strenuous efforts were made to inoculate the trade unions of the land with Socialist revolutionary

principles by means of a method designated in those days as 'boring from within.' These efforts were made in the local unions, in the local central bodies and through these, it was sought to carry the revolutionary propaganda into the national conventions of the AFL as well as the K. of L."²

In July, 1891, De Leon had become a delegate to the powerful New York City District Assembly 49 of the Knights of Labor, representing Mixed Assembly 1563. In 1893, the United Hebrew Trades joined the District Assembly. This central body of the Jewish unions (largely needle trades), was strongly influenced by the Socialists. Many of its members came to the United States as political refugees from Czarist Russia. In the same year, together with several other Socialists, Daniel De Leon was elected delegate to the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor.³

The Knights of Labor had been formed in 1869 as a secret organization. Twelve years later, in 1881, it decided to be a secret society no longer. With the reversal of policy, it entered a stage of rapid growth. From 19,000 members in 1881, it grew to over 42,000 in one year; by September, 1884, it numbered over 71,000. The organization reached its peak in 1886, during the great struggles against wage cuts and for the eight hour day, when membership was estimated at 700,000 to 1,000,000. After 1878, non-working persons were also permitted to join. The Knights demanded equal pay for equal work for both sexes and many women's clubs became part of the organization. During its most active days, included in the K. of L. were many thousands of unskilled workers and an estimated 60,000 Blacks and 50,000 women.

Terence V. Powderly, the Grand Master, expressed increasing antagonism to labor and friendship for the employers, although the district assemblies were carrying on many strikes and boycotts. Powderly insisted that the Knights of Labor act, solely, as an educational, academic and pro-temperance organization. Under his conservative leadership, the organization began to decline rapidly. Powderly disclosed contempt for the workers and the unions; indulged in "red-baiting" against the socialists; ruled that Asiatics could not be admitted, and, generally carried out a dictatorial undemocratic administration of the organization. In 1887,

membership declined to one-half million. By 1889, the workers were leaving the Knights of Labor in large numbers, to join the American Federation of Labor.⁴

By the time of the 1893 convention of the Knights of Labor in Philadelphia, the membership was a shadow of its former numbers but the organization was still a factor in the labor movement.⁵

Under De Leon's leadership, a loose coalition to depose Powderly was formed, composed of dissident members of Powderly's own machine, the socialist delegates from District Assembly 49, as well as other assemblies, and some Western Populists. This move succeeded at the November, 1893, General Assembly, in Philadelphia. James S. Sovereign became head of the Knights of Labor and Powderly was discarded.

De Leon reported to the New York State convention of the SLP, held in 1894 in Syracuse, his belief that the socialists would soon take over the K. of L.⁶

At the 1894 General Assembly, the eight socialist delegates, led by De Leon, were the balance of power. De Leon again threw his support to Sovereign, who had promised to appoint Lucien Sanial editor of the National Journal of the Knights of Labor. Sovereign had made a speech, when he was elected Grand Master Workman, calling for "abolition of the wage system" and establishment of a cooperative industrial system. But he reneged on his promises and offered only a minor post to Sanial.

De Leon angrily addressed Sovereign: "In asking that Brother Sanial be made editor of the Journal, our purpose was not to give him a job, but to have him turn the Journal into what it should be, and what it has not been, especially during the last year, to wit a source of instruction to its readers."⁷

De Leon concluded from Sovereign's attitude that the Knights of Labor officers had "degenerated into a band of brigands, no better than those of Powderly's old regime." He proposed the withdrawal of the SLP members from the Knights of Labor. The Socialists, an important factor in the K. of L., here displayed a characteristic lack of patience in working in non-socialist organizations.⁸

Eight years earlier Engels had written to Florence Kelley:

"The great thing is to get the *working class to move as a class*; that once obtained, they will soon find the right direction and all who resist . . . will be left out in the cold with small sects of their own. Therefore I think the Knights of Labor a most important factor in the movement which ought not to be pooh-poohed from without but to be revolutionized from within . . ." ⁹

When Edward Aveling and his wife, Eleanor, Karl Marx' daughter, visited America, in 1886, they attempted to press Engels' viewpoint that the socialists join the Knights of Labor, on the pre-De Leon SLP. The sectarians of the National Executive Committee attempted to smear the Avelings with vague charges of financial irregularity.

Florence Kelley, influenced by the NEC smear, and not realizing that the attack was aimed, primarily, at Engels and his insistence on work within the K. of L., wrote Engels, urging him to be wary of the Avelings. Engels replied February 9, 1887: "Your fear of my being unduly influenced by Aveling in my view of the American movement is groundless. As soon as there was a national American working class movement, independent of the Germans, my standpoint was clearly indicated by the facts of the case. That . . . is the real starting point of American working class development. If the Germans [in the faction-ridden pre-De Leon SLP] join it, in order to hasten its development in the right direction, they may do a great deal of good and play a decisive part in it. If they stand aloof, they will dwindle down into a dogmatic sect and be brushed aside as people who do not understand their own principles." ¹⁰

The SLP's history of isolationism and of anti-union Lassalleism was an obstacle to De Leon's work in the Knights of Labor. His strong bid for national control of the Knights of Labor having failed, he developed the conviction that work within labor organizations, not controlled by socialists, was futile and anti-socialist. He did not conceive of working in the local bodies on specific issues which concerned the membership, nor of patient, persistent, continuous education on socialist principles in the assemblies and local unions. De Leon's work of 1893 and 1894

within the Knights of Labor was over, and the advice of Engels, given over the years, was ignored.

At the 1895 convention of the Knights of Labor, the Sovereign-controlled machine rejected De Leon's credentials and refused to seat him. Sovereign was reelected by a narrow margin.

The Socialist Labor Party proceeded to form the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance.

Daniel De Leon later said of the Knights of Labor period: "Ignoramuses took hold of the organization; a million and a half men went into it, hoping for salvation; but instead of salvation, there came from the veils of the K. of L. local, district and general assemblies, the developed ignoramuses, that is to say the labor fakers, riding the workingman and selling him out to the exploiter . . ." ¹¹

The experiences of De Leon and the SLP "boring from within" the AFL, reflected the same pattern.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1. Marx and Engels, *Letters to Americans 1848-1895*, Appendix, "The Labor Movement in the United States," by Engels, International Publishers, 1953, p. 289. Engels also wrote to Frederick Sorge, November 29, 1886 (*Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Correspondence 1846-1895*, New York, International Publishers, 1934, p. 450) . . . "the Knights of Labor are a real power" . . . He called for the Socialists to "form within this quite plastic mass a core of people who understand the movement and its aims" and later, take over the leadership "of at least a section."
2. Henry Kuhn, *Daniel De Leon. The Man and His Work. A Symposium, "Reminiscences of Daniel De Leon,"* NEC, SLP, New York, 1919, pp. 6, 7.
3. John R. Commons, et al., *History of Labor in the United States*, New York, MacMillan Co., 1921, p. 519.
4. Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. II, New York, International Publishers, 1955, pp. 157, 294-296.
5. Henry Kuhn, *The Socialist Labor Party During Four Decades, 1890 to 1930*, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1931, p. 15.
6. Foner, p. 295.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Correspondence 1846-1895*, Letter 203, p. 452.
10. Marx and Engels, *Letters to Americans 1848-1895*, p. 169.
11. Daniel De Leon, *Reform or Revolution* (Speech delivered in Boston,

January 26, 1896), New York, New York Labor News Co., pp. 54, 55. For more on the visit of the Avelings to the United States, see Dorothy Rose Blumberg, *Florence Kelley, The Making of a Social Pioneer*, Augustus M. Kelley, New York, 1966, p. 68. See Norman J. Ware, *The Labor Movement in the U. S. 1860 to 1890*, New York, Vintage Books 1964, 1st ed. 1929, "De Leon in the Knights of Labor," p. 112.

CHAPTER V

"BORING FROM WITHIN" THE A.F.L.

De Leon began to guide the work of the Socialists within the AFL at a time when the AFL officialdom had started to drift towards the policy of cooperation with the employers. The leadership did not want to involve their craft unions in the militant movements around them. From 1888 to 1890, the majority of the members of the AFL were in favor of a major campaign for the eight-hour day. Unendurably long work hours were the rule in many factories. These were suffered by men, women and children alike.

At the December 1888 convention of the AFL, the delegates went on record for a nationwide strike for the eight-hour day, to take place May 1, 1890. The convention resolved that although the 1886 general strike had not been entirely successful, it had opened the door for the eight-hour day in many plants and trades.

The "benefits" gained, said the convention resolution, "by reason of the eight-hour movement [in 1886] are sufficient to encourage us to make the venture again. We should not lose sight of the fact that as a result of the movement in 1886 a number of trades have reduced their hours..."¹

The International Labor Congress, held in Paris, in 1889, at the time of the organization of the Second International, voted for simultaneous demonstrations throughout Europe, on May 1, 1890.

At the AFL convention in May, 1889, the AFL leadership whittled down the concept of a general strike. The executive council was directed to confine the strikes to one union at a time, beginning with the carpenter's union. As a result, the carpenters succeeded in winning shorter hours in many cities, but the gen-

eral struggle for the eight-hour day was weakened and fragmented by the AFL leadership.²

The AFL had made great strides since its inception in 1881, when representatives of six craft unions met (cigarmakers, carpenters, printers, iron and steel workers, molders, and glass workers) and formed the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions. Forty-five thousand members were represented. Samuel Gompers, one of the founders, was elected president and held this office in this organization, and the subsequent AFL (except for one term—1894-1895), until his death in 1924.

A principal reason for organizing the AFL was reaction against the anti-trade-union bias of Powderly, head of the Knights of Labor. Thus, when on December 8, 1886, the American Federation of Labor was officially organized in Columbus, Ohio, by a convention called by the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, present were many former members of the Knights of Labor.

Thirteen national unions and twelve locals and city organizations were represented. The Preamble recognized the existence of the class struggle: "A struggle is going on in all the nations of the civilized world between oppressors and the oppressed of all countries, a struggle between the capitalist and the laborer."³

The unions which came into the AFL were composed, on the whole, of skilled, native-born, craft workers, concerned with day-to-day struggles for the eight-hour day and higher wages. They did not concern themselves with unskilled workers, particularly if they were foreign-born, Blacks or Asiatics.

As the Knights of Labor declined, the AFL gained headway. In 1886, there were 138,000 members. During the next twelve years, the membership doubled. In 1898, more than one-quarter million members had union cards. In 1900, there were one-half million workers on record. From 1900 to 1904, the membership grew to one and one-half million.⁴

During its early years, Gompers and other AFL leaders showed no antagonism to the Socialists and their work in the unions. Gompers boasted proudly that he had studied Marx's *Capital* and had corresponded with Engels. However, conflict arose between

the AFL and the Socialists in New York City in the late '80s and early '90s. The Socialists were gaining strength in the AFL and began to bid for control at the AFL conventions. Gompers and the officialdom, representing the highly skilled craft unions, spoke more and more for the aristocracy of labor. They were influenced, too, by their desire to maintain the economic position they had achieved, in the face of the frequent crises of capitalist production. The Socialists charged that the Central Labor Union of New York was being influenced by conservatives and corrupt politicians. In February, 1889, the Socialists and militant-led unions organized the rival Central Labor Federation, which received an AFL charter from Gompers.

After making peace, in December of the same year, the Central Labor Federation and the Central Labor Union united into one body. The union leaders of the Central Labor Union remained lukewarm towards the eight-hour day movement. In addition, the militants had the unpalatable suspicion that political corruption existed. These factors, and their own sectarian, isolationist viewpoint drove the Socialists and their allies, for the second time, to secession. In June, 1890, they revived the Central Labor Federation.

This time, Samuel Gompers denied a charter to the Central Labor Federation, on the ground that it had affiliated with itself, besides 38 trade unions, one section of the Socialist Labor Party, whose delegate was Lucien Sanial. The Federation, led by Sanial, appealed directly to the AFL national convention, held in Detroit, December, 1890. De Leon was already a factor in the leadership of the SLP. The Socialists stubbornly insisted on their right to have their dual union function as an organization within the AFL. De Leon and Sanial displayed an extremely sharp, vindictive attitude towards Gompers.

The matter was argued in a nine-hour debate. Sanial was finally denied his seat and the convention sustained Gompers' contention by a vote of 1699 to 535.

The fact that nearly one-third of the delegates supported the Socialists is all the more significant because the issue was not put by Gompers in the light of a debate on socialist principles, or the

need for more militant struggle, nor a fight against cooperation with employers. Gompers debated on the formal grounds that the AFL was not a political party and did not accept direct political affiliation.

The Socialists considered this vote a setback, but resolved to continue work within the AFL. At the same time, the *Weekly People* was attacking AFL officialdom, often using personal abuse, and sharpening the battle lines. In 1891, the supporters of Gompers organized the Federation of Labor of New York, denying membership to any political party. The SLP representatives were dropped as official delegates. The Central Labor Federation remained outside the AFL. The SLP withdrew its delegates from the central labor bodies in 16 cities.⁵

De Leon was soured at the failure to control the AFL nationally. But work within the AFL was to continue until 1895. Through these years, an intensive struggle took place inside the AFL. On the one side were arrayed the socialist trade-union members, arguing for a "class struggle" policy and advocating socialist principles. On the other side, stood Gompers and his craft-union leadership, rapidly veering towards reformism.

The failure of the AFL national leadership to fully support the coal miners and the western metal miners in their strikes, and the Buffalo switchmen's strike, etc., drew the ire of such Socialists as Thomas J. Morgan and other Chicago SLP members, who were deeply involved in the day-to-day work of the AFL. Morgan was an influential trade-union leader as well as a member of the SLP and stayed in the AFL to continue his fight, in spite of reverses.

The AFL national convention of 1893 reflected the crisis in industry and the strong, militant sentiment among AFL members. Morgan presented an eleven-point program, to be submitted to the AFL membership in a referendum.⁶ Included in the program were demands for compulsory education, the eight-hour day and municipal ownership of public utilities.

The most controversial plank (Plank Ten) was named the "Socialist Plank." It called for "the collective ownership by the people of all means of production and distribution."⁷ The increase

in the strength of the socialists within the AFL was seen in the resulting vote to conduct the referendum—2,244 to 67.

After the referendum was held, the socialists, with good reason, claimed that the majority of the AFL members voted in favor of the socialist proposals.

At Denver, Colorado, at the 1894 convention, however, arbitrarily, and apparently against the instruction to delegates by the AFL membership, the AFL leaders ignored the results of the referendum and offered a denatured substitute for Plank Ten, which called for "abolition of the monopoly system of land holding and the substitution therefor of a title of occupancy and use only."

In retaliation, the socialists joined with the mine workers to elect the conservative John McBride of the miners' union, to replace Gompers. Unfortunately, McBride, also, was an opportunist.

Daniel De Leon hailed the victory of McBride's election in his usual, biting fashion: "*The People* consoled itself over the then recent decease of the Great American Humbug and King of circus shows, with the reflection 'Barnum is dead, but Gompers is alive.' That consolation proved short lived. In the light of recent events and the election returns, there is no consolation left. Barnum is dead and so is Gompers."⁸

At the 1895 convention of the AFL, however, Gompers again was elected President.

Again a seat was denied to Lucien Sanial at the convention. He again brought credentials from the New York Central Labor Federation.

Gompers now had the organizational concept of a "pure and simple" trade union, with simple economic demands. This provided De Leon, with the derisive term "pure and simplers" when referring to AFL leaders. The AFL, nationally, under Gompers, gravitated to a "class collaboration" policy—what is good for the employers is good for labor. Not Socialism, but a Fair Wage, was the goal. Not independent action of labor, but "rewarding your friends and punishing your enemies at the hallot box."

Undoubtedly the AFL leadership, representing as it did the "aristocracy of labor," had a tendency from the beginning toward

class collaboration. Undoubtedly, also, the sharpness of De Leon's invective against Gompers and other AFL leaders—but also against the AFL as a whole—were factors in the split between the AFL and the SLP—on the narrow issue of direct SLP representation, rather than on basic trade-union principles.

A typical reference to the AFL by De Leon was in the *People* of December 24, 1893, where De Leon paid his respects to that organization, as “at best a cross between a windbag and a rope of sand; it has no cohesion, vitality or vigor worth mentioning. . . . An organization that is put to such a Hobson's choice as Gompers . . . and John McBride has no reason for being. In point of fact, it is deadlier than dead.”⁹

Gompers blamed his position on the sharpness of De Leon's attack. He wrote to a friend, “After all, it is merely a difference of opinion as to the most practical methods to be employed in securing to the laborer his just rights and until the advent of Professor De Leon in the Socialist movement we managed matters so that we could at least work together. This man's characteristics of intolerance to every one that does not adopt his policy, his venom and spite crop out at every opportunity [and] that makes it impossible for anyone that has any self respect to have any dealings with him or those for whom he speaks. He has simply widened the chasm between the different wings of the labor movement.”¹⁰

Gompers' followers charged that he never advocated exclusion of the socialists from membership. He was merely bitter because he felt the socialists were trying to control the organization.

De Leon clearly described what he felt about non-revolutionary unions in an article that appeared in the *People* of July 29, 1894, after the Pullman railroad workers' strike had been defeated: “The union of the workers that expects to be successful must recognize (1) the impossibility of obtaining a decent living while capitalism exists, the certainty of worse and worse conditions, the necessity of the abolition of the wage and capitalist system, and their substitution by the Socialist or Cooperative Commonwealth, whereby the instruments of production shall be made the property of the whole people . . . and (2) the ne-

cessity of conquering the public powers at the ballot box by the vote of the working class, cast independently.”¹¹

This and similar editorials, written while the struggle of the Socialists in the AFL was at a high point, tended to discourage working in the AFL unions, or any unions which were not socialist-led and based on socialist principles.

The fact that Lucien Sanial and the SLP members made their fight on the basis of the right of an official SLP representative to be a delegate to the New York Central Labor Federation and to the AFL national conventions, weakened and narrowed the fight against Gompers' opportunist policies and for the ten-point program. This fact also disturbed Frederick Engels. He wrote to Hermann Schlueter in the United States on January 29, 1891: “I see clearly enough that things are going downhill with the S.L.P. . . . Nor do I understand the quarrel with Gompers. His federation is, as far as I know, an association of trade unions and nothing but trade unions. Hence they have the *formal right* to reject anyone coming as the representative of a labor organization that is *not* a trade union. I cannot judge from here of course whether it is *propagandistically* advisable to expose oneself to such a rejection. But it was beyond question that it had to come and I for one cannot blame Gompers for it.

“But when I think of next year's International Congress in Brussels [Second Congress of the Second International, August 16-22, 1891], I should have thought it would have been well to keep on good terms with Gompers who has more workers behind him at any rate than the S.L.P. and to ensure as big a delegation from America as possible here, including his people. They would see many things there that would disconcert them in their narrow-minded trade union standpoint and besides, where do you want to find a recruiting ground if not in the trade unions?”¹²

After the 1895 convention rebuff to Sanial, De Leon formally abandoned the mass unions and formed the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. This was a step which he had been leading up to for several years. As a result, the SLP was split from the American trade-union movement and many socialists were separated from the mass movements of the time. Such outstanding socialists as

Thomas Morgan in Chicago, and many others, continued to work in the unions and parted company with De Leon.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1. Anthony Bimba, *The History of the American Working Class*, New York, International Publishers, 1927 (Reprinted 1937), pp. 211 ff.
2. Ibid.
3. Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 2, New York, International Publishers, 1955, pp. 141, 142.
4. *Brief History of the American Labor Movement*, U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1957 revision, Bulletin No. 1,000.
5. John R. Commons, *History of Labor in the United States*, New York, MacMillan Co., pp. 517-520.
6. Writers disagree as to the number of planks in this program. Some called it an eleven-point program and others twelve. As a matter of fact the socialists charged that in the next convention the AFL executive committee renumbered the planks in order to confuse the membership.
7. Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement 1897-1912*, New York, Columbia University Press.
8. Ibid., p. 14.
9. Nathan Fine, *Labor and Farmer Parties in the U. S. 1828 to 1928*, New York, Russell and Russell, 1961 (First printing 1928), pp. 147-183.
10. *Labor and American Politics*, Edited by Charles M. Rehmus and Doris B. McLaughlin, Ann Arbor The University of Michigan Press, 1967, p. 138.
11. Nathan Fine, *Labor and Farmer Parties in the U. S.*, Ibid.
12. Marx and Engels, *Letters to Americans 1848-1895*, New York, International Publishers, 1953, pp. 232-234. It is interesting to note that Engels had written to Sorge, January 6, 1892, informing him he had refused Gompers' request to act as arbitrator between the AFL and the SLP, p. 240.

CHAPTER VI

DUAL UNIONISM—SPLITS AND EXPULSIONS

The Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance marked a turning point in the life of the Socialist Labor Party. Until the dual unionist policy was irrevocably launched by De Leon, the SLP was the only socialist party of any consequence in the United States. It owned the significant socialist publishing house, the New York Labor News Company, and dominated the socialist press of the country. The *People* was the only socialist paper published in the English language and the SLP controlled a number of foreign language newspapers as well. Membership was growing and votes for party candidates in the elections were increasing.

The formation of the STLA, however, brought several years of bitter wrangling to the SLP, preceding a decisive split in the socialist movement. The Socialist Party of America was organized at the turn of the century. The membership of the SLP was halved, as the Socialist Party grew. The great influence of Daniel De Leon is emphasized by the fact that even after this split, many Socialist Party members still relied for guidance on the SLP—its press, its publishing firm, and on the pamphlets of De Leon. Though many Socialists had left the SLP, it still was, in large measure, the fountainhead of Marxist education in the United States.

There were several underlying reasons for organizing the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. De Leon's disillusionment with the AFL was complete. Gompers and his officialdom had refused to back important strike actions or struggles for the unemployed. They had shied from the bitter battles for the eight-hour day and movements against widespread child labor.

Another factor also discouraged De Leon from continuing efforts within the AFL. The workers, on the whole, had won some

important democratic rights. They had male suffrage and the right to elect the majority of their government representatives. Among many workers, therefore, the necessity of political action was discounted. The majority of workers considered the struggle for their economic needs as the only avenue for their militancy. There was a feeling, too, that existing conditions could be escaped. The working-class individual, conceivably, had a way out through the Homesteading Act. The remnants of the disappearing frontier still existed, and in the young country, farms could be established farther West or small businesses might be set up.

Industrial capitalism, however, continued to expand. One positive aspect of the position of the American working class escaped De Leon. Just as monopolistic suppression and expansion was rising, so also was the resistance of the workers. The working class was increasingly organized (however opportunist-led), gaining in militancy and experience and beginning to win better conditions. Union smashing was being defeated. De Leon, however, felt that it was hopeless to suppose that AFL members would gravitate toward the political party of socialism. Interested only in day-to-day needs, they were corrupted by their dishonest leaders. He believed, therefore, the need was to build a union of a different type, a class-conscious, industrial, socialist revolutionary union.

He expressed this idea in a speech made to a group of textile strikers in New Bedford, February 11, 1898, in which he looked back upon the "boring from within" period.¹

"We could not get at them [the broad masses of the workers]. Between us and them there stood a solid wall of ignorant, stupid and corrupt labor fakers. Like men groping in a dark room for an exit, we moved along the wall, bumping our heads, feeling ever onwards for a door... The wall was solid. This discovery once made, there was no way other than to batter a breach through that wall. With the battering ram of the STLA, we effected a passage; the wall now crumbles. At last we stand face to face with the rank and file of the American proletariat; *and we are delivering our message...*"

At its inception, in 1895, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alli-

ance had approximately 15,000 members. The new organization included the most powerful group of the Knights of Labor, District Assembly 49 of New York City; the Central Labor Federation of New York, composed mainly of socialist-led German unions; the United Hebrew Trades of New York, and small Newark and Brooklyn central bodies, also made up of socialist-led unions. The Socialist Labor Party figures showed that of the estimated 15,000, most of them were pulled out of the Knights of Labor and the AFL.²

Henry Kuhn, who was national secretary of the SLP at the time the STLA was formed, said that the organization included a "swarm" of progressive fraternal societies and small local unions that made up the Central Labor Federation.³

The SLP convention of 1896 endorsed the STLA and its principles. The main resolution, written and introduced by De Leon, committed the SLP to dual unionism and ordained its steady, numerical decline.

The resolution stated, in part: "Both the AFL and the Knights of Labor, or what is left of them, have fallen hopelessly into the hands of dishonest and ignorant labor leaders... These bodies have taken shape as the buffers for capitalism, against whom every intelligent effort of the working class for emancipation has gone to pieces.

"The policy of 'propitiating' the leaders of these organizations has been tried long enough by the progressive movement and is to a great extent responsible for the power which these leaders have wielded in the protection of capitalism and the selling out of the workers.

"No organization of labor can accomplish anything for the workers that does not proceed from the principle that an irrepressible conflict rages between the capitalist and the working class, a conflict that can be settled only by the total overthrow of the former and the establishment of the Socialist Commonwealth."

It was resolved: "That we hail with unqualified joy the formation of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance as a giant stride toward throwing off the yoke of wage slavery and of the robber class of capitalists. We call upon the Socialists of the land to carry

the revolutionary spirit of the STLA into all the organizations of the workers, and thus consolidate and concentrate the proletariat of America in one irresistible class-conscious army, equipped both with the shield of the economic organization and the sword of the Socialist Labor Party ballot."⁴ This resolution was passed 71 to 6.

Many SLP members had felt the STLA should take on itself the job of organizing the unorganized. This would be an important role and would avoid bringing it into conflict with existing unions.

They interpreted one clause in the trade-union resolution of the 1896 SLP convention as expressing this viewpoint, in urging *"All socialists to join the organization of their trades to which they respectively belong."* In the face of this clause, De Leon continued to steer a course of head-on collision with the AFL unions.⁵

The years of existence of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, 1896 to 1905, were marked by constant splitting and expulsions within the SLP. SLP trade unionists who vigorously opposed deserting and fighting the mass unions, particularly the AFL, were expelled. In 1899, the New York section of the SLP left the party to join the *Volkzeitung* split-off. Henry L. Slobodin was named national secretary of the group. Morris Hillquit left the SLP and became part of the leadership of this anti-De Leon group. The group held the historic anti-De Leon Rochester convention, January 1, 1900, with 59 delegates, speaking for about one-half of the members of the SLP. The convention attacked De Leon's leadership as dictatorial and opposed his isolationist dual unionism.⁶

The 1900 convention of the SLP replied to the loss of one-half of its membership by officially dropping support of all immediate demands and passing a rule that no member of the SLP could hold office in a "pure and simple" union. Henry Kuhn, National Secretary of the SLP, who remained a member of the SLP and loyal to De Leon until De Leon's death, here developed his major difference with De Leon.

"I was a proletarian taken from the workshop," he said, "and put into an office." He had been a member of the Bookbinder's Union of the Knights of Labor. "Unable to see that any good, but

on the contrary, a lot of harm might follow the adoption of such a measure—I opposed it . . . I did not forget that most of these organizations were formed in obedience to the pressure of the class struggle and that they furnished a legitimate field for our propaganda . . . When such organizations were formed, our men, as a rule, better equipped than their fellow workers, were looked to to take office. Forced to decline, because their party forbade it, they were placed in a position which to maintain required more than can be expected from the average man . . . The rank and file naturally regarded such an attitude as an act of hostility against themselves, regarded the party that ordered it as a hostile force. Thus it meant that our members had to vacate the field and leave the labor faker in undisputed control . . ."

Some years later this rule was revoked. "We had drawn the bow too tight . . . The damage had been done and could not easily be repaired." Kuhn did not quite realize that he was making an effective argument against De Leon's entire program of dual unionism.⁷

The ex-SLP anti-De Leon group made unity proposals to the Social Democratic Party, led by Victor Berger and Eugene V. Debs, the Utopian Socialist who had embraced socialism in 1897. There were approximately 5,000 members of the party, with several sections in Massachusetts, in addition to strong organizations in the West and Mid-west.

After negotiations on details, the unity proposals were accepted. A joint convention was called for July 29, 1901, in Indianapolis. Seventy delegates of the SLP split-off, led by Hillquit, attended. Forty-seven delegates came from the Social Democratic Party, with eight delegates from miscellaneous groups, left-wing Populist and militant metal miners among them. The convention represented some 10,000 members of the various groups.

The Socialist Party of America was thus organized. It was not unified as to policy, but the choices of all were Debs, nominated as the candidate of the party for President, and Job Harriman for Vice-President.* In the 1900 election, 94,768 votes were polled for

* Before the 1900 presidential election, the leadership of both parties selected Debs as the joint presidential candidate, from the S.D. party and

the candidates. The party grew rapidly and in the 1904 national election, Debs and Ben Hanford polled 402,400 votes.⁸

Henceforth the SLP was a small, active, compact party, too often isolated. The Socialist Party of America had connections and influence in the mass movements, though its composition was a mixed brew. It included trade unionists such as Debs and "Big Bill" Haywood—left wingers—, as well as trade unionists who were pro-Gompers collaborators, right wingers such as Berger, centrists of whom Hillquit was an example, and members of the clergy and intellectuals, many of them reformists.

De Leon's position remained firm, in spite of mounting criticism. Nothing less than the Socialist Revolution would improve the worker's life. Demands for immediate needs served as "sops" and "palliatives," which spread illusions among the workers. The SLP must remain outside of the mass movements that were non-revolutionary. He saw no allies in the middle class nor among poor farmers.

In one speech, *Reform or Revolution*, De Leon discussed, in turn, the Knights of Labor, the American Federation of Labor, the Single Tax movement and Populism. He condemned them all.⁹

He carried this position to its ultimate conclusion in his speech "The Warning of the Gracchi," delivered April 16, 1902.

"The characteristic weakness of the proletariat," he said, "renders it prone to lures . . . The essence of this [socialist] revolution—the overthrow of wage slavery, cannot be too forcefully held up. Nor can the point be too forcefully kept in evidence that, short of the abolition of wage slavery, all 'improvements' either accrue to capitalism or are the merest moonshine."¹⁰

The working class did not need allies. "The working class," said De Leon "must march by its own light, look to itself alone . . ." The demand of the working class? Only "the unconditional surrender of the social felon . . . Capitalism, as the usurpation, must be overthrown."

True to this position, the SLP program for New York City, in

Job Harriman, of California, represented the anti-De Leon SLP, for vice president. Formal unity was not achieved until after the election was over, in 1901.

1901, was the last to contain any "partial," or immediate demands in an election program.¹¹

Marx and Engels took a contrasting position, on immediate demands. They watched the American labor movement closely for signs of mass struggle for everyday needs. In a letter to Dr. Ludwig Kugelmann, October 9, 1866, shortly after the end of the Civil War, Marx emphasized this phase of the struggle: "I was very much pleased with the American Workers Congress at Baltimore . . . The slogan there was organization for the struggle against capital, and curiously enough, most of the demands which I drew up for Geneva were also put forward there by the correct instinct of the workers."¹² Marx referred to a program he had written for the London delegation to the Geneva Conference of the First International. He went on:

"I deliberately restricted it to those points which allow of immediate agreement and concerted action by the workers and give direct nourishment and impetus to the requirements of the class struggle and the organization of the workers into a class."¹³

Marx and Engels had, of course, many times warned against the formation of sects, divorced from the workers of America. "The International," Marx had written to Charles Bolte, a member of the First International in New York City, "was founded in order to replace the Socialist or semi-Socialist sects by a real organization of the working class for struggle . . ." Marx related this to America. "Obviously," he wrote, "the General Council does not support in America what it combats in Europe."¹⁴

After Marx's death, Engels continued to combat sectarianism in the American movement. He wrote what might have been a guideline for De Leon on February 8, 1890, to Sorge: "The trade unions, etc. are the thing to begin with if there is to be a mass movement." Two months earlier, he had written him: "It is impossible simply to drill a theory in an abstract, dogmatic way into a great nation, even if one has the best of theories, developed out of their own conditions of life, and even if the tutors are relatively better than the SLP."¹⁵

The warnings were overlooked. The Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, contrary to Daniel De Leon's hopes, did not take hold.

On the declining membership of the STLA, Morris Hillquit commented, "Out of the 228 organizations chartered by the Alliance between December, 1895 and July 4, 1898, only 114 survived at the opening of its third annual convention at Buffalo, in July 1898, and of these only 54 were paying dues to the Alliance."¹⁶ When the STLA merged with the IWW in 1905, its membership had dropped from 15,000 to 1,450.¹⁷

The list of resignations and expulsions at the turn of the century is almost endless. The De Leon leadership of the SLP had instituted mass expulsions within its organization in an effort to unify the membership on the STLA. The reading of SLP literature printed during those years takes on a nightmarish quality. The splitters included, in 1895, the Jewish Abenblatt (also against SLP trade union policy); in 1897 four Jewish assembly districts were expelled; the Cleveland section was expelled for a joint conference with the Populists; the St. Louis section was eliminated.¹⁸ In addition to those who left on principle, there were careerists and self-seekers, opportunists who took this opportunity to escape SLP discipline and the watchful eye of De Leon, ever trained against any mistake of what he considered opportunism.

Not only Thomas Morgan, but a number of additional active Chicago trade unionists refused to abandon united-front campaigns, and were expelled. Charles Sotheran, the well-known English author who had migrated to America and become an organizer for the SLP and a member of its National Executive Committee, lost a long battle to stay inside the SLP. He wanted to retain membership in the AFL, the Knights of Labor and the Populist movement. He was expelled.¹⁹

De Leon characterized this important leader as: "This 250 pound perambulating scrap book and historic junkshop." This allusion disposed of Sotheran's great knowledge of the history of early American Socialism.²⁰

Even De Leon's close associates were shaken by the desertions and expulsions. Kuhn commented on the year 1902, "The defections we were now to experience were of a different character, for it was often blood of our blood, and flesh of our flesh that had to be torn away."²¹ Particularly mourned was Hugo Vogt, a

leader of the SLP, and the man who had introduced De Leon to the theories of Socialism.

Lucien Sanial with Vogt had sponsored De Leon when he joined the SLP. He, Vogt, and 31 others signed a statement dated October 20, 1902, against "The inquisition in the SLP." These two, who with De Leon had for many years formed the SLP's leading triumvirate, finally parted company with De Leon.

Rudolf Katz who left the SLP only after De Leon's death, said: "Not only Sanial, but quite a number of others who were functionaries of the party, agitators, organizers, members of the editorial staff of the Daily People, secretaries of state committees, writers in prose and writers in rhyme—all went helter skelter down the incline from the heights occupied by the Socialist Labor Party. So many went down and with such swiftness that De Leon remarked that he had to look at himself in the mirror at least once a day to find out whether he had not gone with the others."²²

"Mother" Ella Reeve Bloor had written De Leon early in the 1890's with deep enthusiasm, "I hope soon to be able to help more materially in the cause of Socialism . . . I feel the 'dry bones' quickening with new life and the *steady, unflinching* march of the SLP attracts me . . ."²³

Now she felt that De Leon's sectarian position was isolating the Socialist movement from the working class. She had been a co-worker of De Leon for a number of years. She became an organizer of the STLA and was on its Executive Board.

In her autobiography, she wrote: "De Leon believed these Socialist unions [STLA] would gradually win over a majority of the workers, and the unions would then take over the management of society. Since De Leon and the SLP neglected the immediate struggles of the workers in favor of abstract propaganda for socialism, none of their attempts at dualism resulted in strong, permanent unions . . . I found many workers antagonistic because I was organizing a rival union . . . I was beginning to see the harm of this separation of the political party from the economic struggles, and the isolation of the revolutionary workers into a sectarian group."²⁴ Mother Bloor left the SLP and in 1902 joined the Socialist Party, as did many of those who parted com-

pany with the SLP. She paid tribute, however, to De Leon's "insistent and brilliant exposure of right wing opportunism, and the AFL bureaucracy. His analyses of how capitalists buy off the leaders of the workers . . . were incorporated in some of the finest pamphleteering produced by the Socialist movement."²⁵

William Z. Foster, who as a young man had clashed with the dual unionists many times, in a number of his writings, later, polemized bitterly against De Leon. Foster, though a syndicalist in those early years, was strongly in favor of working within existing mass unions, as did the French syndicalists. In a pamphlet, *The Bankruptcy of the American Labor Movement*, he reflected: "The STLA was the first [dual union] of a general character and a revolutionary make up. Its foundation clearly marked the embarkation of the radical movement upon its long continued and disastrous program of dual unionism . . ."

Foster described the effects of such a policy: "Dual unionism . . . wastes the efforts of those vigorous elements whose activities determine the fate of all working class organizations. It does this by withdrawing these rare and precious militants from the mass trade unions, where they serve as the very mainspring of vitality and progress, and by misdirecting their attention to the barren and hopeless work of building up impossible utopian industrial organizations."²⁶

The hold which De Leon's policies had on the working class is emphasized by the fact that after the Russian Revolution, the Communist parties which were formed, continued to advocate dual unionism and to condemn immediate demands.

John Williamson, who went through his socialist apprenticeship in the SLP and who left because of its opposition to united front and immediate demand struggles, pointed out that the United Communist Party, in its June, 1920 program, claimed: "Craft unionism has become the bulwark of capitalism in this country. The Socialist Party policy of 'boring from within' the AFL is vicious in that it is only an indirect and hypocritical method of supporting an inherently reactionary labor organization. A Communist who belongs to the AFL should seize every opportunity to voice his hostility to this organization, not to re-

form it, but to destroy it." This program might well have been written by De Leon.²⁷

The Manifesto of the Socialist Party Left Wing, in early 1919, also displayed this influence. The slogan "no compromise" was embraced. Such immediate demands as factory laws, old-age pensions, unemployment insurance, sick benefits, etc., were characterized as "the whole litter of bourgeois reforms." Socialists were warned: "By agitating for these reforms, the Socialist Party would be playing into the hands of the American imperialists."²⁸

It took several years before the Communist Party (CPUSA), united from several Communist groups, shook off these sectarian antecedents.

Despite the decline in SLP membership, in the period of the STLA, Daniel De Leon's lecture tours throughout the country brought capacity crowds. His well-prepared speeches were printed in pamphlet form and were circulated far beyond SLP membership. As an editor, De Leon exerted substantial influence through articles and editorials. Thousands of copies of Marxist classics and current pamphlets continued to be made available, through the SLP publishing house.

De Leon's position in working class history was assured, as his organization, the SLP, grew weak.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

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2. A Symposium. *Daniel De Leon. The Man and His Work*. Henry Kuhn, "Reminiscences of Daniel De Leon," New York, NEC, SLP, 1934, p. 10.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
4. Nathan Fine, *Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States, 1828-1928*, New York, Russell and Russell, 1961, p. 166. (Originally published in 1928.)
5. For Socialist Party position against the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, and for effects of De Leon's policies, see *Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States*, pp. 147-184, especially p. 163.
6. William Z. Foster, *History of the CPUSA*, New York, International Publishers, 1952; Chapter 6, "The SLP," p. 89; Chapter 7, "The Socialist Party," pp. 91-106. See also Job Harriman. *A Debate on the Tactics of the STLA towards the Trade Unions*. Between Daniel De Leon of the SLP and Job Harriman of the Social Democratic Party, New Haven, Connecticut, Job Harriman, November 25, 1900. De Leon Archives. Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

7. *A Symposium. Daniel De Leon, The Man and His Work.* Henry Kuhn, "Reminiscences of Daniel De Leon," pp. 27, 28.
8. Foster, *History of the CPUSA*, pp. 94-97. Also Nathan Fine, *Labor and Farmer Parties*, p. 216. See also Chapter 6, pp. 147-183, particularly p. 163.
9. *Socialist Landmarks*, "Reform or Revolution," an address delivered by De Leon January 26, 1896 in Boston, Mass., Published by New York Labor News Co., 1952, pp. 54-61.
10. Daniel De Leon. *Two Pages from Roman History*, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1962, "The Warning of the Cracchi," p. 85.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
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14. *Ibid.* Letter 156, November 23, 1871, pp. 315-319.
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21. *A Symposium. Daniel De Leon, The Man and His Work*, "Reminiscences of Daniel De Leon," p. 30.
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23. De Leon archives, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.
24. Ella Reeve Bloor. *We Are Many*. New York, International Publishers, 1940, pp. 53-60.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Anthony Bimba, *History of the American Working Class*, New York, International Publishers, 1927, pp. 203, 204.
27. John Williamson, *Dangerous Scot*, New York, International Publishers, 1969, pp. 40, 41.
28. *Class Struggle Magazine*, May 1919, Vol. III, No. 2, Brooklyn, New York, Socialist Publication Society, pp. 209 ff. (See also David Saposs, *Left Wing Unionism* [Brookwood Labor College], New York, International Publishers, 1926. For the position of those splitting from the SLP on the STLA issue—the anti-De Leon faction, see N. I. Stone, *The Attitude of The Socialists Towards the Trade Unions*, Address to Rochester convention to form new Socialist Party (January, 1900). Volkzeitung Library. Included in De Leon Archives, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.)

CHAPTER VII

DE LEON'S FIGHT AGAINST OPPORTUNISM

In De Leon's bitter war on opportunism, he found particularly distasteful the former labor or Socialist leaders who became government officials and no longer maintained any allegiance to the workers. Personally, he represented the antithesis of the labor fakers and self-aggrandizers he hated. After leaving Columbia University, throughout his entire career as a socialist leader, he was dogged by the confines of a meagre, almost poverty-level income. This endured until his death. No enemy, however bitter, could impugn De Leon's personal conscientiousness and devotion to the socialist cause.

So inadequate was De Leon's income that in 1910 it became necessary for Paul Augustine, then National Secretary of the Socialist Labor Party, to send out a letter of appeal for funds to pay De Leon's back wages. The debt, the letter said, "is now in the neighborhood of \$3,000. Comrade De Leon is one of those employees of the party, who practically never received in full even the moderate wage due to him for his work . . . De Leon never complained . . ." ¹

De Leon refused to accept fees for translations, articles written and lectures, considering them part of his work as a proponent of Socialism.

Arnold Petersen, De Leon's chief disciple, after his death, described "a typical instance of De Leon's uncompromising attitude" in a letter written to the National Executive Committee of the SLP, in March, 1899, "hy one, Evalenko, head of the old 'International Publishing Co.'" * Petersen quoted: "In consideration

* Not connected with the contemporary firm of that name.

of the literary work of Comrade Daniel De Leon, generously bestowed upon the edition of a publication *I have brought about, I have tendered him a remuneration of fifteen dollars* (\$15). He, however, declined to accept the recompense for any labor he confers on socialist literature. But being a representative of private enterprise, I do not consider it morally right to profit by the magnanimity of socialists. I therefore submit the fifteen dollars (\$15) to you for the benefit of the SLP."²

Only a few months before his death, De Leon wrote a letter (January, 1914) stating that the arrearage in his wages was so great that he could not accept extra speaking dates. "That performance has lasted too long for my own financial powers to resist this strain. The consequence has been that I have had to look elsewhere for revenue. Such sources are limited, seeing that I will not write for magazines on Socialist subjects."³ It was not until several years after De Leon's death that the SLP was finally able to pay De Leon's widow his arrearages.

De Leon was in an excellent moral position to expose graft, corruption, careerism and dishonesty among the ex-labor government officials.

The high entrance fees and apprentice system in the AFL, in the early 1900s had virtually eliminated unskilled workers from membership. The AFL projected the slogan that the interests of the employers and the workers were identical and, hence, there was no class struggle. The employers grew willing to maintain relationships with member unions.

In 1901, the Civic Federation was formed, on the initiative of Republican party boss, Senator Mark Hanna. He had been responsible for putting into office President William McKinley, the open representative of big business. The Civic Federation's stated purpose was "to settle disputes between capital and labor." It actually served to bind the AFL to the interests of the employers. Samuel Gompers, President of the AFL, became its vice-president. He and John Mitchell, President of the United Mine Workers of America, each received \$6,000 yearly for their Civic Federation activities. The capitalists needed their "labor lieutenants," as Han-

na called them. De Leon seized this phrase and dubbed the labor members of the Civic Federation "Labor lieutenants of the capitalist class."

Gompers by this time was fully class collaborationist in his philosophy. The American Federation of Labor was directed, through the Civic Federation, to cooperate with industry. Individual craft unions could dicker with employers over wages, hours of work and conditions on the job. But Gompers avoided the broader class struggles.

In the *Federationist*, the publication of the AFL, he said, in support of the Civic Federation, "The unions have supported no other theory except the one which says that labor is entitled to reasonable pay, a reasonable working day and human conditions of labor."

John Mitchell further explained: "Hostility between labor and capital is not a necessity . . . The one cannot exist without the other . . . The interest of one appears to be the interest of the other and the welfare of one the welfare of the other."⁴

De Leon paid his respects to these AFL leaders in every speech and everything he wrote, whether a pamphlet or in the columns of the *Weekly and Daily People*. In *Plebs Leaders and Labor Leaders*, he wrote, "I have a mass of documents upon the subject [opportunist labor leaders],"⁵ and indeed his research and documentation were voluminous and the opportunists squirmed under the barrage of facts.

In this speech, he pointed to the record of Robert Howard, member of the Massachusetts Legislature, as an example. Howard had been, formerly, a member of the Spinners Union.

"Howard, who had strenuously upheld the capitalist system in the Massachusetts Legislature, was of the Fall River, Massachusetts Spinners' Union. When his mind recently failed him, and his property had to be administered, he was found to be worth \$100,000, a large part of it in stocks in the very mills in which were flocked to the skin the spinners of whose organization he was an officer."⁶

Among examples of corruption, there was also P. M. Arthur,

Grand Chief of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, who, it was found, owned a large block of railroad stock.

De Leon furiously and contemptuously condemned the ex-labor leaders who were trying, in that period, to restrict immigration. "It is no accident," he wrote, "that the Edward F. McSweeneys of the Shoemakers' Union, the McKims of the Carpenters, the T. Powderlys of Knights of Labor antecedents, and a Frank P. Sargeant, Grand Master of the Locomotive Firemen, are the ones picked by the capitalist Presidents and are found ready to fill the places in the Department of the Commissioner of Immigration."

The industrialists were obtaining increasing profits through intensive exploitation of adult workers and widespread exploitation of child labor. But "What does the Labor Leader do? He lends the color of labor to these capitalist maneuvers." He listed a series of former labor leaders, then factory inspectors and labor commissioners, who winked their eyes at child labor, violations of safety and other factory laws.⁷ He named former labor leaders, in public office, who condoned the use of police brutality and the militiaman's rifle. "What does the labor leader do? From his safe perch in office, he condones by his silence, the brutality of capitalism, occasionally even applauds it."

And, heading the unsavory list, "Along with 24 active limbs of capitalism [within the Civic Federation]," said De Leon, "we find in the niches of Hanna's Temple to the Goddess of 'Industrial Peace' a choice collection of twelve Labor Leaders." Each of these "prates without exception of 'Harmony between Employers and Employe.' In other words, each upholds the capitalist system of society. This should be warning enough."⁸

De Leon concludes: "The Labor Leader of today is nothing but a masked battery, from behind which the capitalist class can encompass what it could not without . . . the work of enslaving and slowly degrading the Working Class, and along with that, the work of dehousing and ruining the country."⁹

One pamphlet, printed by the National Executive Committee of the SLP in 1905, was unique in SLP literature. It was not written by a member of the Socialist Labor Party, but by Robert

Randell, of the Socialist Party. *John Mitchell Exposed*, by Randell, a delegate from Wyoming to the 1905 United Mine Workers National Convention in Indianapolis, consists of two speeches, appealing eloquently for working-class solidarity in struggle.

In 1903, Mitchell had split the Northern and Southern Colorado coal miners, and the bituminous from the anthracite miners. This tactic succeeded in breaking the miners' state-wide strike. The strikers in Southern Colorado, who were unorganized, were literally starving. Mitchell had withdrawn all support, after calling them out on strike. Evicted from their homes and living in tents, they were raided and physically beaten by thugs of the coal mine operators, in a struggle that lasted more than a year. Mitchell, meanwhile, was being wine and dined by the coal barons and the Civic Federation.

Much to his credit, Daniel De Leon appreciated the depth of the need expressed by Randell and, brushing aside narrow party boundaries, he made the speech of this left-wing SPA member available to the American workers.

Randell charged that Mitchell had sent the organized Northern Colorado miners back to work on order of the coal operators and the Denver Citizen's Alliance, in spite of their rejection of the demand for an eight-hour day and increased wages. Before agreeing to return to work, the Northern Colorado miners refused, three times, to accept Mitchell's "settlement." Mitchell, at the same time, had refused to allow the Southern Colorado miners to raise funds from eastern locals of the union.

Mother Jones, who toured the coal fields, speaking against Mitchell's policies, had been expelled from the UMW "the organization she has labored so faithfully to build," said Randell in the convention. "Mr. Mitchell, Mother Jones' white-haired head will soon be laid at rest; her voice so eloquent to plead the cause of the oppressed will soon be hushed; her heart that beat so warmly in sympathy for suffering humanity will be stilled in death. But when she is laid forever in the grave, no one can say that she ever betrayed, that she ever played false, the toiling and disinherited masses who are fighting the battle for labor's emancipation."¹⁰

Randell angrily cited the fact, on the other hand, that on

December 5, 1903, Mitchell had attended a banquet of the Denver Chamber of Commerce with members of the Denver Citizens Alliance, the Peahody Law and Order League and the mine owners. Randell charged that Mitchell was dining on pheasant while the miners went hungry.

"You, Mr. Mitchell," he said, "let them starve and starve and starve, and go cold and naked [many were wearing gunny sacks for shoes] until they were forced by hunger and suffering to return to the mines."

Randell, too, was expelled from the UMWA for his opposition to Mitchell. The rank-and-file miners in the 1905 convention raised the demand that Mitchell sever his connection with the Civic Federation. However, Mitchell defended the Civic Federation and praised Frank Robbins, a bituminous mine owner, who had given \$5,000 to the anthracite strikers. Robbins, in return, presented diamond "mementos" to Mitchell, at a banquet both attended.¹¹

De Leon, not only in this instance, but many times, responded to current issues which confronted the workers and raised an eloquent voice, in speeches and in the columns of the *Daily* and *Weekly People*. He put his sectarian formula in the background and stepped out to fight for workers' specific needs with all his energy and talent.

In his battle against opportunism, De Leon fought for the ideology of revolutionary socialism and against the conciliationist theories of the reformers.

A gauge of socialist versus opportunist theories, according to De Leon, was the question of "confiscation." The press had been denouncing socialism on the grounds that socialist society would confiscate the property of the capitalists; this was immoral, a form of theft. Confiscation was also discussed in the AFL unions and by the Socialist Party. Many right-wing intellectuals proposed that the workers should gradually "buy" the trusts and gradually compensate the capitalists for their property. In his *Warning of the Gracchi*, De Leon hammered against such ideas as reformist.

De Leon said of "confiscation": "When at the critical stage of the revolution he was active, in, Tiberius Gracchus took a 'short

cut across lots' and removed, regardless of 'legality,' the colleague who blocked his way, consciously or unconsciously he acted obedient to that canon of the Proletarian Revolution that it must march by its own light . . . When afterwards, Tiberius looked for justification to the laws of the very class that he was arrayed against, he slid off the revolutionary plane, and dragged his revolution down, along with himself . . ."

"The proletarian revolution", De Leon continued, "marches by its own light; its acts are to be judged by the code of legality that itself carries in its folds, not by the standard of the existing law, which is but the reflex of existing usurpation . . . The Proletarian Revolution shares a feature of all previous revolutions, the Capitalist Revolution included. A new Social System brings along a new Code of Morals."¹²

No militant in the modern Proletarian Revolution can be demoralized by the howl of "Confiscation," said De Leon.

In his debate, in 1912, with Thomas F. Carmody, Attorney General of New York State, along the same lines, De Leon said: "The question is, Do the requirements of the working class demand a different state of society? If the answer is Yes, then that appropriation is not confiscation at all."¹³

Until his death, De Leon drew the line between reformists and Marxists on the confiscation question. In 1913, in *Fifteen Questions About Socialism*, printed after he died, one of his most scholarly works, he returned to the question at length. He was answering an attack on socialism by the Catholic Providence, Rhode Island *Visitor* of September 12, 1913.¹⁴ "From top to bottom production is today conducted by the Working Class. As a consequence, all the capital that is, all the plants 'used in production and exchange' are actually in the hands, actually in the possession of the working class."

The debates of De Leon on the right of the working-class to "confiscate" drew the line between the reformist, the Utopian, the Bernstein gradual evolutionist parliamentarian, and the scientific revolutionary Marxist.

The leadership of the Socialist Party, in large part, wanted the "buying" of capitalist property. There had crystallized within

the SPA a growing right-wing, including opportunists and self-seekers, which gradually took over the apparatus of the Socialist Party. Victor Berger, of Milwaukee, the first Socialist member of Congress, represented this right-wing and was its most extreme exponent. He gave a theoretical base to the trade-union opportunists, since he was an avowed follower of Edward Bernstein and his anti-Marxist theories of slow development, of evolutionary socialism and denial of the existence of the class struggle. Berger was a racist as well as a reformer.

One of De Leon's best known polemics on opportunism of right-wing Socialist Party leaders, printed in pamphlet form, was originally entitled *Berger's Hits and Misses*. (It was later entitled *A Socialist in Congress. His Conduct and Responsibilities*.)¹⁵ This series of articles and editorials, published in *The People* from April to October, 1911, discussed Berger's acts in Congress. Particularly sharp was "Old Age Pension" (*Daily People*, August 6, 1911).

Berger had introduced an Old Age Pension Bill; De Leon analyzed it in detail. "Expectation soars," he wrote . . . "to droop and drop plumb down. First, the pension is to accrue only after the veterans' 60th year . . . The average life of the American soldier of industry is barely 40 . . .

"Second, the pension is to be forfeited by a conviction of felony, the disqualification is sweeping. Whatever action a bourgeois Court pronounces felony is to be a felony. No distinction between acts of moral turpitude and honorable class conscious acts, which in a spirit of revenge, the bourgeois Courts stamp felonious and punish as such . . .

"Third, the pension rolls are closed to him or her who though 60 years of age has a weekly income of \$6.77. All of those who can eke out some income after years of toil 'are to be left out in the cold.'

"Fourth, no pension for the orphans of the toilers, male or female, whose occupation has, either indirectly by undermining their health, or directly, through any of the numerous 'accidents' on the firing line of industry, sent them to early graves.

"Fifth and last and perhaps the worst of all . . . the 'lucky'

ones . . . who have escaped death before 60, and who can filter through the excluding provisions of the bill, they are to be remunerated with the bountiful maximum amount of 57 cents and 14 mills a day (\$4 a week) or the minimum amount of 14 cents and 29 mills a day (\$1 a week). Sixty years of toil and poverty that yielded affluence into the coffers of the Capitalist Class are to be rewarded—with the crust of an average 35 cents and 73 mills a day (\$2.50 a week).

"Such a bill, if it came from an outspoken bourgeois, would confirm the Socialist maxim that 'Charity is to steal wholesale and return retail.' Coming in the name of Socialism, the bill is an insult to Socialism and to the working class alike. It is an insolently insulting bunco game of 'big boast, and small roast.'"¹⁶

This analysis again demonstrates that De Leon overcame his sectarianism to play a role in the current demands and movements of the day. De Leon did not argue against the bill because it was an immediate demand. He opposed the bill because of its severe limitations. Those critics who condemn De Leon's sectarianism and dual unionism, without mentioning his participation in current struggles, commit an error by omission. Important in the long fight he waged against reformists and misleaders of labor was the SLP's ownership of the active New York Labor News Company. This publishing firm made it possible for De Leon throughout the years to publish in the English language, a steady stream of classical and current socialist literature, much of it printed beforehand in the *Daily* and *Weekly People*.

This fierce and constant polemic against opportunism by De Leon was a significant contribution to American socialist experience.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

1. Arnold Petersen, *Daniel De Leon, Social Architect*, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1941, Vol. I, pp. 222, 223.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 224, 225.
4. L. C. Raisky, *The Struggle Against Opportunism*, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1959, pp. 4, 5. (First published in English in two installments in *The Communist*, Sept. and Oct. 1930, N. Y. Communist Party, USA.)

5. "Plebs Leaders and Labor Leaders," from *Two Pages From Roman History*, by Daniel De Leon. An address delivered April 2, 1902, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1903 (Reprinted many times), pp. 41-56 (1962 edition).
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Robert Randell, *John Mitchell Exposed*, New York, NEC, SLP, New York Labor News Co., 1905, pp. 6, 7.
11. In the 1911 national convention of the United Mine Workers of America, a resolution was passed demanding that Mitchell leave the Civic Federation. See Nathan Fine, *Labor and Farmer Parties In the United States, 1828-1928*, New York, Russell and Russell, 1961, pp. 257-261.
12. *Two Pages from Roman History*, "The Warning of the Gracchi," by De Leon. An address delivered April 16, 1902 in New York City, New York Labor News Co., 1962, pp. 89-92. This, with "Plebs Leaders and Labor Leaders," included in this pamphlet, was praised for the knowledge demonstrated of Roman history and the application of its lessons to contemporary struggles.
13. *Socialism versus Individualism*. Debate between Daniel De Leon and Thomas F. Carnody, April 14, 1912, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1955 (2nd printing), pp. 32-35, also pp. 43-46.
14. *Fifteen Questions About Socialism*, by Daniel De Leon, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1961 (first edition 1914), pp. 84-99.
15. Daniel De Leon, *Berger's Hits and Misses*. (Later entitled *A Socialist In Congress. His Conduct and Responsibilities*.) New York, New York Labor News Co., 1963 (first printing 1912), p. 61.
16. Ibid., pp. 61-65.

CHAPTER VIII

TRANSLATOR, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Without De Leon's work as pamphleteer, translator, editor and publisher, a large reservoir of Marxist theory and tactics would have been lost to American readers. He popularized Marxist classic literature and was responsible for printing, for the first time in the English language, many of the writings of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Karl Kautsky, Ferdinand Lassalle, August Bebel, Paul Lafargue, etc. This theoretical literature, originally printed largely in German, had been available, heretofore, almost exclusively to the German emigre socialists. De Leon determined that American workers should be introduced to scientific socialist theories.

William Z. Foster, perhaps De Leon's most severe critic, paid tribute to this phase of De Leon's work: "De Leon was a devoted and tireless fighter for the revolution, as he understood it. He was also a brilliant writer and from 1890 until his death in 1914 he exerted a greater theoretical influence upon the revolutionary movement than any other American intellectual before or since."¹

Foster many times criticized what he analyzed as De Leon's revisionism in applying Marxist theories to the mass movements. But, "De Leon formally accepted such basic concepts as historical materialism, Marxist economics and the class struggle. He also circulated the Marxist classics, knew the importance of industrial unionism, and was an advocate of a strong, centralized party."²

For De Leon, the publishing of the Marxist classics was one of his chief weapons against the American reformists. In addition, he poured forth articles and pamphlets, attempting to beat back the rising tide of revisionism. He began translating and printing the Marxist classics in rapid succession.

In 1892, Engel's *Socialism: From Utopia to Science* was first printed in English in the *People* and later was issued in pamphlet form with a preface by Lucien Sanial. The first edition of this brochure included two essays by Engels: "Historical Materialism" and "The Mark." In 1902, both were also printed as separate pamphlets.

Karl Marx's *18th Brumaire*, translated by Daniel De Leon, and with a preface by him, was printed in weekly installments in the *People*, from September 12, 1897 to November 14, 1897. In 1898, De Leon's translation of this important work was issued in book form with prefaces by Marx and Engels.

The editor's note to the 1952 SLP edition of this book reveals that both the old International Publishing Company and later the Kerr Company used De Leon's translations. Kerr bought the copyright of De Leon's translation of the *18th Brumaire* in 1907 and several editions subsequently appeared.

De Leon undertook the translation of the classic, *Woman Under Socialism*, most of which August Bebel wrote while in prison. This work, discussing the evolution of the position of women in capitalist society, was first printed in book form in 1904 by the New York Labor News Company. It was and remains a basic work on the discrimination existing against women and the road to emancipation for them.

Marx's *Critique of The Gotha Program*, translated by De Leon, tackled opportunism among the Socialists of Germany. It was brought for the first time to American readers on January 7, 1900, in the *Daily People* and later reprinted, in pamphlet form, by the New York Labor News Company.

De Leon added this comment to the first printing of *The Gotha Program*: "The letter of Marx printed on the seventh page of this issue is as valuable as it is hard reading. Let it not be superficially skimmed over..." Later editions contained an introduction by De Leon, which was a polemic supporting Marx, entitled "Did Marx Err?"

In 1901, the SLP printed *Value, Price and Profit*, and followed this, in 1902 with *Wage-Labor, and Capital, Free Trade, The Paris Commune*, and *The Civil War in France*, all writings by

Marx. Starting in 1894, De Leon translated and printed a number of Karl Kautsky's pamphlets. These included *The Class Struggle*, *The Socialist Republic*, *The Cooperative Commonwealth* and *The Proletariat*.

De Leon's translations were not limited to classics of revolutionary theory alone, nor to English from the German language. His translations of literature included the monumental twenty-one volume *The Mysteries of the People*, by Eugene Sue, from the French.³ He translated also *Franz von Sickingen*, a play by Ferdinand Lassalle.

Among the steady flow of pamphlets he produced, De Leon wrote *Reform or Revolution*, based on a speech delivered in 1896, which made a sharp impact on the socialist and labor movement of the day. This opposed reformism and presented the basic principles of a socialist party organization. Much of it is currently applicable. *What Means This Strike?*, one of his most popular and widely circulated pamphlets, was a reprint of a speech delivered to the New Bedford textile strikers in 1898. It urged affiliation with the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance and declared that Socialism was the only answer for all of labor's problems, and, incidentally, was one example of De Leon's involvement with workers in their front line struggles.

A compilation of De Leon's editorials and speeches on the organizational principles for a socialist party, written from 1899 to 1910, were later published by the New York Labor News Company (in 1931) under the title *Party Ownership of the Press*.

De Leon displayed his scholarly approach to ancient history in the pamphlet *Two Pages From Roman History*, which V. I. Lenin later admired. The two lectures, of which this is composed: (1) "Plebs Leaders and Labor Leaders" and (2) "The Warning of the Gracchi," delivered in 1902, drew current lessons from the struggles of ancient times.

One of the most influential pamphlets on the trade-union question, written by De Leon, was *The Burning Question of Trade Unionism*, originally a speech delivered in Newark, New Jersey, on April 21, 1904. Here De Leon expanded on his theory that the trade unions must be revolutionary and that the industrial

Republic would be the future order of society (the future socialist society would be administered by the revolutionary trade unions). This pamphlet came out at a time of greatest disillusionment of the workers with the AFL leadership and was one of the influential propaganda weapons used to prepare the groundwork for the organization of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

A companion pamphlet, a speech delivered July 10, 1905, immediately after the IWW was organized, was hailed by revolutionary union advocates such as Eugene V. Debs and "Big Bill" Haywood. This speech, entitled *The Preamble of the IWW* (later changed to *The Socialist Reconstruction of Society*), revealed how closely the IWW principles and those advocated by De Leon coincided. In this category also belongs *As To Politics*, a compilation of De Leon's articles in the *People* in 1906 and 1907, in which De Leon attempted to walk a thin line in disassociating his position from that of the syndicalists, while emphasizing the predominant importance of the economic organization (revolutionary) over the political party.

In *Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress*, De Leon displayed his alignment with the left-wing of the international movement and polemized against the opportunists on a world scale.

In a much discussed pamphlet, *Watson on the Gridiron*, published in 1911, from a series of articles in the *Daily People* of 1909 and 1910, De Leon presented several basic principles of Marxian economics, as opposed to Populism, and enlarged on his ideas on monogamy.

The effective exposure of the right-wing of the Socialist Party of America, contained in his pamphlet, *Berger's Hits and Misses*, has been discussed in the previous chapter. Here was a compilation of 30 articles in the *Daily People* during the 62nd Congress of the United States, in 1911, in which Berger's day-to-day activities as a Socialist Party Congressman were critically analyzed.

De Leon, almost continuously, wrote and spoke against the upholders of capitalism, of whom there were many in the press and pulpit. A number of his debates were printed in pamphlet form, including the *De Leon-Carmody Debate*, printed in 1912.

Here De Leon crossed swords with Thomas J. Carmody, then Attorney General of the State of New York. *Capitalism Versus Socialism* represented a debate, in 1913, with William H. Berry, ex-State Treasurer of Pennsylvania.

De Leon answered William H. Mallock, an Oxford professor, who visited the United States under the auspices of the National Civic Federation to crusade against Socialism, in an address *Marx on Mallock*, delivered in 1908, and later entitled *Socialist Versus Capitalist Economics*. Another important polemic against proponents of capitalism was *Marxian Science and the Colleges*, which includes De Leon's articles, from 1902 to 1913, defending the theory of Socialism from the attacks of various college professors.

Father Gassoniana, contains 19 editorials polemizing against Father Thomas Gasson, who delivered an address in Boston, in February, 1911, against socialism. This pamphlet, issued in 1912, was reprinted in numerous later editions under the title *The Abolition of Poverty. The Vatican in Politics, Ultra-Montanism*, editorials written from 1891 to 1914, pointed to the Catholic hierarchy as upholders of the capitalist system. Still another rebuttal to attacks on Socialism by Catholic leaders was *Fifteen Questions*, written in 1913 and printed shortly before his death. One of his best works, in this he responded to attacks on Socialism by the Providence, Rhode Island *Roman Catholic Visitor*.

Socialism versus Anarchism, a lecture delivered in Boston October 31, 1901, following the assassination of President McKinley, is an important pamphlet for the student of De Leon. *Industrial Unionism, 1905-1913* presents De Leon's basic concepts, in thirteen editorials within that period. The popular *Socialist Economics in Dialogue*, a collection of the Brother Jonathan Dialogues which appeared in the *Daily* and *Weekly People*, over a period of more than twenty years, presents Marxian economics in popular form.

In addition to the more comprehensive pamphlets, the New York Labor News Company printed a series of miniature pamphlets, called *The Buzz Saw Series*, each just a few pages, which were widely distributed; some were written by De Leon. Later

the SLP issued a series of agitational pamphlets called "The Arm and Hammer" pamphlets.

Many persons, who afterward played active, and sometimes leading roles in the struggles of the American working class were first attracted to socialist philosophy and to the works of Marx, Engels and other Marxist authors through the painstaking work of Daniel De Leon as lecturer, pamphleteer, translator, editor and publisher. The mere citing of the number of Marx and Engels classics made available to the American public by De Leon, indicates the great extent of the service rendered by him in this field.

Labor historians have neglected the anti-war writings of De Leon. It was not until 1941 that some of his most important articles and editorials, from 1898 to 1913, were gathered together by the SLP and printed as a pamphlet, entitled *Capitalism Means War*.

The Spanish-American War, in 1898, had turned a page in American history and De Leon began his fight against imperialism. He saw the war as a logical development in the rapid expansion of U. S. monopoly capitalism to a world power. When the war emerged, and a wave of jingoism spread over the country, he once more made effective use of the columns of the *People*. His many editorials relentlessly exposed the war as a naked imperialist venture. His efforts were aimed toward giving socialist content to the anti-imperialist movement that sprang up in the United States.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

1. William Z. Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin*, New York, International Publishers, 1937, p. 33.
2. William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, New York, International Publishers, 1952, p. 79.
3. Olive Johnson, "Daniel De Leon, Our Comrade," in *Daniel De Leon, The Man and His Work*, Book I, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1918, p. 96.
(Also see, for additional publications by De Leon, Oakley C. Johnson and Carl Reeve *Writings By and About Daniel De Leon, A Bibliography*, New York, The American Institute for Marxist Studies, 1966.)

CHAPTER IX

OPPOSITION TO THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

The differences within the SLP at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, on April 11, 1898, mitigated against a strong, united anti-war struggle. Nevertheless a large peace movement developed.

De Leon forcefully hammered away on the socialist position against the war and daily used his voice and pen to exposure of each move of the reactionary, imperialist government of William McKinley. The expansion of monopoly capitalism had been leading towards war for more than a decade. During the '90s, aggressive American capitalism was looking abroad for the way out of the severe economic crisis of 1893-1897. The Spanish-American war signalled the appearance of the United States as a full-blown world power, competing for world markets and for the possession of colonies, and seeking opportunities for exploitation of colonial and semi-colonial peoples.

Senator Albert J. Beveridge put the pro-war position of President McKinley and his government succinctly: "Today we are raising more than we can consume," the Senator said. "Therefore we must find new markets for our capital, new work for our labor."¹ Exports had climbed from \$392,000,000 in 1870 to \$857,000,000 in 1890.²

Theodore Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, was agitating for an aggressive imperialist policy. An advocate of a large Navy for the purpose of world domination, he saw the Navy grow in strength from fifth to third largest in the world between 1898 and 1900.

Population had leaped from 31,000,000 in 1860 to 76,000,000

in 1900, including 14,000,000 foreign born.³ The financiers saw in foreign conquest a means of diverting the growing struggles of the workers and independent farmers against impoverishment. Under the cloak of patriotism and war, they felt they could stifle the protests of the labor movement.

The imperialists in the government, led by McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge in the Senate, moved on several fronts: (1) the use of the Monroe Doctrine to drive the English and other competition out of Latin America, as they did in Venezuela; (2) penetration of China, to compete there with other capitalist powers; (3) acquisition of the Spanish possessions in a war with Spain; and (4) acquiring Hawaii and other Pacific territory. McKinley, after his election to the presidency in 1896, immediately initiated the policy of empire building.

In July, 1897, he submitted a treaty to Congress for annexation of Hawaii. American businessmen had already gained a stranglehold on Hawaii's economic and financial life. After a "revolution" had been engineered against the native chiefs, Hawaii was formally declared annexed, by vote of Congress in July, 1898. In 1899, the United States and Germany divided the Samoan Islands between them, the U. S. taking Tutuila with its large harbor.⁴

The workers and peons of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines were on the verge of wresting their independence from their Spanish monarchical exploiters. The Spanish army was occupying Cuba, in order to suppress the revolt which had been active there for a number of years. Advocating "freedom" for the Cuban people, McKinley, backed by a jingoist press, including William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*, launched a campaign for war against Spain. That it was a war for imperialist conquest, rather than for liberation of Cuba, became increasingly apparent.

An impressive anti-war movement was initiated. William Jennings Bryan, who had been defeated by McKinley in 1896, Mark Twain, and many prominent middle-class intellectuals took a stand against the colonial ambitions of the government. An Anti-Imperialist League, middle-class led, was formed in November, 1898. The movement quickly grew to 500,000 members.

Samuel Gompers became one of its vice-presidents. The AFL unions almost unanimously resisted the moves of the government for war with Spain. The AFL convention of 1898 issued a strong statement against the war moves and most of the individual unions spoke out. Many rank and file members took part in the Anti-Imperialist League and other anti-war activities.⁵

A series of moves was made by the government, aimed at getting the United States involved in the war. Atrocity stories were broadcast in the press, with crocodile tears shed for the Cuban revolutionists. In spite of the fact that Spain had already agreed to arbitrate all differences, McKinley felt that only conquest could fulfill the objectives American capital had set for itself.

On February 15, 1898, when the battleship Maine blew up (cause unknown) in Havana harbor, with more than 260 American victims, Theodore Roosevelt sounded the war call, claiming the explosion to be "an act of dirty treachery." Later historic opinion held the cause of the explosion to be an accident. A "no stops barred" hysteria ensued, led by the McKinley administration and the Hearst press.

With the slogan "Remember the Maine" reverberating, Congress appropriated \$50,000,000 for military preparation. On April 9, 1898, McKinley asked for authority for military intervention. April 25, sixteen days after Spain had actually capitulated to the demands of McKinley, Congress passed a joint resolution authorizing McKinley to expel Spain from Cuba by force.

In this war, which lasted from April to August, 1898, 260 Americans were killed in actual fighting; 5,200 died of disease.

Theodore Roosevelt, secretly, with his naval officers, had mapped out a plan to seize the far off Philippine Islands, in the event of war, and gave instructions to Commodore George Dewey to that effect.

Dewey complied and Roosevelt then resigned, to lead, with General Leonard Wood, the Rough Riders' charge up San Juan Hill. When the war ended, Roosevelt's friend, John Hay, said it had been "a splendid little war." Roosevelt, now a hero, was elected Governor of New York and then Vice-president of the

country. He became President, after McKinley was assassinated.⁶

The United States, through the war, had seized Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippine Islands by force. In the treaties which followed, U. S. capital maintained a dominating position in these possessions. The large trusts immediately tapped the population for cheap labor and the lands for super profits.

The AFL union leadership only opposed war before war was declared. Gompers then turned about face. Supported by most of his officialdom, he declared strong support for the war. A little later, switching again, Gompers and his followers opposed the peace treaty, because of its oppressive provisions directed against the conquered peoples. Finally, the AFL's opposition to imperialism faded away.⁷

Daniel De Leon made heroic efforts to educate the American people as to the real issues in the war and played an important role in the anti-war movement. He made the *People* a vigorous and passionate anti-war spokesman.

"Capitalism means war," he wrote, in one of his frequent editorials.⁸ Attacking the war, he stretched the hand of brotherhood to the workers of Cuba and the Philippines, calling for a joint struggle against the capitalist class. He addressed a letter to the proletariat of Spain on the imperialist nature of the war. His position as a proponent of soldier fraternization was similar to the position taken later by left Socialists, the Russian Bolsheviks and Lenin, during World War I. De Leon wrote to the Spanish workers: "The respective committees, called governments of the ruling class in our two countries, have ordered us to fly at each other's throats. The attitude in which you and we are placed toward each other exemplifies the deep inhumanity, the monstrous absurdity of the social system in which we live. What quarrel have you with us or we with you... you have been forced to mingle the blood of your own veins with the sweat of the brow of Cuba's working class, to secure to your common exploiters the enjoyment of Cuba's fertility. As to us... our fate, or the fate of Cuba's toilers will not be improved. The social system under which we both live remains the same.

"Our Republican government seeks by a war to perpetuate

itself. The government of your Queen Regent seeks to prevent its own downfall." De Leon exposed the economic causes of war. Permanent peace could be achieved through Socialist revolution. "Peace and civilization can never be, so long as nations are overlorded by the brigand class that now holds the reins of power... The working class of all nations has but one enemy, the capitalist class of all nations, its own nation at the head of the list." Again, here De Leon suggested the position that Lenin took in 1915-1919, of transforming the imperialist World War I into a civil war against imperialism.

De Leon concluded: "Blinded by lack of class consciousness, many of our own class on both sides of the waters, may allow themselves to be absorbed and carried away by their exploiters... In the meantime, across the smoke of belching cannons, and the flood of human gore that this war will cause to flow, we, the class conscious proletariat of America reach you the hand of brotherhood..."⁹

De Leon differentiated his position from that of the anti-war liberals and pacifists, since his position was based on class struggle.

"There is a nation closer at hand," he said, "that the powers that be are getting ready to fight in the hope of putting it down—and keeping it henceforth down, under the iron heel of military despotism. That nation is not all white of skin, nor all black, nor all yellow. That nation is cosmopolitan. It is the working class of the land."¹⁰

During the hysteria following the blowing up of the Maine, in an editorial entitled *The National Honor*, De Leon urged the American people not to be panicked into supporting the war. "In the harbor of Havana, several hundred United States marines have recently met their death... Who and what is that government that is to redress the wrong done to our honor? Upon its own character depends its fitness to demand and execute redress. Is it fit?" De Leon placed blame for the war squarely on his country's imperialist government. "The government of the United States represents not our people but a small minority thereof: ... it represents the nation's dishonor; it represents the capitalist class exclusively, i.e. a felon class."¹¹

His own government, he wrote, was red with the blood of thousands, guilty of attrition against "the nation's veterans of labor" who were killed and starved in mills, mines and factories. The current anthracite miners' struggle was an example. "The class that government represents is even now in the prisoners' dock in Wilkes Barre, for the wholesale murder of workingmen . . . can so disreputable a government, with no honor of itself to guard, truly avenge the insult done to our flag? No!"¹²

"... The working class, the only honorable part of the population, and that part the overwhelming majority" must obtain power by "capturing the government."¹³

De Leon exposed the connections between militarist government activities and the trusts during the war period. In the *People*, May 15, 1898, he quoted Senator Butler, of North Carolina, on the "Armor Trust," exposing fraudulent sales of defective armor plate to the U. S. Navy. Consistent with this attitude, more than a decade later, when he foresaw on the horizon, the emergence of World War I, he paid his respect to the Steel Trust. He wrote, in the *Daily People*, September 1, 1911, "Back from attendance at the Metallurgical Congress at Brussels, where, in point of fact, the International Steel Trust was launched, J. A. Farrell, president of the U. S. Steel Corporation and Charles M. Schwab, president of Bethlehem Steel Corporation, were emphatic in the assertion that the Congress had laid the foundation for international peace. The gentlemen did not adduce the fact of their returning with Italian armor contracts in their pockets as proof of their assertion."

He was fervently eloquent: "Armor plate promotes no intercourse; foments no commerce; encourages no peace. Armor plate checks intercourse; paralyzes commerce; knocks peace on the head. Armor plate is profitable. This Trust staple must find a market. Where the market is not ready at hand, it must be 'accelerated'. . . the newly created Trust, already a national instigator of war . . . will henceforth be an international prodger of hostilities."¹⁴

On war as an attack against the working class, on March 20, 1898, he editorialized in the *People*, "A foreign war has ever

been the refuge of tyrants from the danger of turbulent elements at home." The war makers planned to "decimate" the workers' struggles at home, he said. They favored the "opportunity that will afford a wholesale blood-letting, without their bearing the charge of inhumanity, on the contrary, giving them a chance to effect patriotic devotion."¹⁵

De Leon carefully followed the career of Theodore Roosevelt. In 1912, up for reelection as President, this advocate of world domination through a huge military machine, was forming his "Bull Moose" Progressive Party. He issued the slogan "The Progressive Party Means Peace," which called forth De Leon's bitter anger. De Leon used the term "Big Stick" Roosevelt and declared: "Hypocrisy reigns supreme, Slaughter being promoted under the pretences of Peace. It is on the other side of the line, in the Socialist camp only, that Peace is a cardinal principle, a religion, a goal earnestly, sincerely and devoutly pursued with all the intelligence at the command of the race."¹⁶

De Leon summarized his position on war in 1911, when the war clouds of World War I were already gathering. "Like all other governments, our own is on a footing of social war with the bulk of its own population—the working class. War at home compels alliances abroad . . . The social anatomy of the working class requires peace. The social anatomy of the capitalist class requires struggle. The law of the existence of the working class is fraternity. The law of existence of the capitalist class is 'Each man's hand against all men's throats.' To expect international peace or that any 'clever contrivance' may insure international peace, so long as the capitalist system prevails, is to ignore the premises of peace."¹⁷

During the Spanish-American War, De Leon continually directed a barrage against those AFL leaders who supported the war. No less important than his anti-war educational campaign in the *People* and in his lectures, was his mobilization of his own party to campaign against the war.

The SLP's opposition to the war was vocal and persistent. Consequently the May Day anti-war parade called by the party was banned by the New York City authorities.

Abraham Cahan, editor of the *Jewish Vorwärts* in New York City, and other right-wing socialists, supported the war. It is not remarkable that they were permitted to parade on May Day.¹⁸

Dehs, representing the Social Democratic Party, told the press in mid-June, 1898 that the Social Democrats "had not been swept off their feet by the war craze . . . So far as I know . . . not one of the 10,000 members of the Social Democracy has enlisted."¹⁹ He, too, called for a "war to wipe out capitalism."

The Minneapolis Section of the Socialist Labor Party, on April 10, 1898, a day before McKinley's war message to Congress, made one of the most militant statements of this period: "If war comes, its burden will fall upon the workers in this country and in Spain. Its fruits will be enjoyed by the capitalists in both countries. Our Comrades, the Socialists of Spain, have denounced war. Let us join hands with them."²⁰

The American monopolists, however, secured their colonial empire. William Jennings Bryan, who had attacked militarism during the war, played a significant part in the ratification of the Treaty of Peace. Bryan urged the Democratic congressmen to vote to ratify the treaty with Spain. December 10, 1898, by a vote of 34 to 33, it was confirmed.

De Leon said caustically: "When Bryan attacks 'militarism' and yet upholds the capitalist system, he is fighting an effect while defending the cause. He and all others of his kind in attacking 'militarism' merely imitate the farmer who knowingly, planted cockleseed and then complained at the nature of the crop."²¹

The United States was now, with the acquisition of the Philippines, also a power in Asia. Exploitation of China was the next plum. The United States declared an "Open Door" policy for that country. American imperialism had been preceded in China by England, France, Germany, Russia and Japan, who were carving the country into spheres of influence, particularly along the coast. The United States declared itself "in" on the game by decreeing that (1) each nation with a sphere of influence should respect the rights of other nations in their spheres; (2) the existing tariff of the Chinese should remain; (3) each nation with a "sphere of

influence" should not discriminate against the right of other nations in levying railroad rates and port dues.

In 1900, the Chinese "Boxers" revolted against foreign imperialism and besieged the British Embassy and other foreign representatives, in Peking. The United States sent a force of 2,500 troops to help break the siege and put down the Chinese revolt and thus elbowed its way into China. From then on, U. S. imperialism participated with "gunboat diplomacy" in the foreign domination of the Chinese peasants and workers.²²

The rise of American monopoly imperialism effected many changes in the American countryside, as well as in the factories. The millions of small, independent farmers felt the squeeze of expanding capitalism, as did labor, and prepared to fight back.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IX

1. Richard N. Current, T. Harry Williams, Frank Freidel, *American History. A Survey*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1965, p. 541.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp. 503-505.
4. Ibid., pp. 544, 545.
5. Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the U. S.*, II, pp. 404-418, International Publishers, New York, 1955.
6. W. E. Woodward, *A New American History*, Garden City, N. Y., Garden City Publishing Co., 1938, p. 696.
7. Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the U. S.*, I, pp. 1-14.
8. A number of De Leon's editorials against the Spanish American War were printed in pamphlet form by the SLP (New York Labor News Co., New York) in 1947 under the title *Capitalism Means War*.
9. De Leon, "A Word to the Proletariat of Spain," *Daily People*, March 20, 1898, in *Capitalism Means War*, pp. 28-30. See also David Herreshoff, *American Disciples of Marx*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1967, p. 131.
10. *Capitalism Means War*, pp. 18-20.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., pp. 14-16.
15. Ibid., pp. 9, 10.
16. Ibid., p. 31. See also *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* (in one volume), New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1931, pp. 338-357, 502-516.
17. *Capitalism Means War*, pp. 12-14.
18. Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, II, p. 416.
19. Ibid., p. 417.
20. Ibid., p. 412.
21. *Capitalism Means War*, p. 32.

22. Richard N. Current, et al., *American History. A Survey*, p. 558. See also pp. 488-517 and 538-560. For material on the growth of the trusts in the Spanish American War, see *History of the Great American Fortunes*, by Gustavus Myers, New York, The Modern Library (Random House), 1936.

CHAPTER X

THE SLP IN THE POPULIST MOVEMENT

The Populist movement, rose to its highest peak in the years 1890 to 1896. The Chicago SLP responded by placing on its order of business the unity of labor and the dirt farmers. Before the movement collapsed in 1896, a high level of farm-labor unity had been reached, especially in Illinois. Widespread discussion of unity between socialists, workers and farmers took place during the six years of this third party activity.

The Populist movement grew most rapidly in the West, Midwest and South, where the crisis in the economy bore down on the small farmers. Farming, paralleling industry, had undergone huge expansion, with the increasing use of farm machinery, particularly on large farms. The farmers, however, were being squeezed by the overall economy.

From 1860 to 1910, the number of farm families rose from one and a half million to six million. Nevertheless income of the farmers dropped. In 1860 the farmers accounted for one half the total wealth of the country. By the early 1900s, this figure had dropped to only twenty percent. Tenantry and indebtedness drastically increased. By the 1890's, 27 percent of the owned farms were burdened with mortgages. By 1910, mortgages on farms had reached \$3,000,000,000. Tenantry, at 25 percent in 1880, reached 37 percent in 1910. The railroads, owners of the grain elevators and warehouses, charged high rents as well as high freight rates. Banks charged high interest and foreclosed on many farms. The bankers and grain speculators paid low prices for crops but charged top prices for farm supplies. Farmers, often, had to burn crops for fuel, rather than sell them at a loss.¹

The Beef Trust controlled the cattle market. In the South, not only the Blacks but the poor whites as well, were being taxed out of existence. Here, too, the number of tenant farmers grew rapidly. Blacks, denied their voting rights, joined the Populist movement in large numbers.

It was in this situation that widespread farmers' movements emerged. State Farmers Alliances were formed which advocated a third party. In the 1890 election, the state Farmers Alliances, then the backbone of the Populist movement, and other groupings based on farmers, elected many candidates to state legislatures in the Western states, in addition to several United States senators and eight congressmen.²

The Populist movement continued its upsurge after the elections. Following a number of preliminary sectional meetings, a national convention was held May 19, 1891, at Cincinnati, Ohio. Present were 1,400 delegates, representing 33 states and territories. The People's Party was organized, with a National Executive Committee of three from each state.

Ironically, during the course of the third party movement, De Leon and Gompers both took a hostile position, considering it not a workers' but a middle-class organization, which included employers of labor. They could not stem the tide, nor the participation of the unions, as well as the SLP members. As the movement grew, a flood of national unions, city and state federations and local unions participated in the Peoples Party campaigns. The national conventions of the AFL from 1890 to 1896 expressed approval of the movement.³

In the Peoples Party convention held at St. Louis, February 22, 1892, the composition reflected the strengthening of the Farmer-Labor alliance. In addition to the farm organizations, delegates included the Knights of Labor, the United Mine Workers Union of Ohio, and a scattering of trade-union leaders. An intensive election campaign began immediately, culminating in a nominating convention in Omaha, on July 4, 1892. More than 1,300 accredited delegates nominated the former Union general, James Baird Weaver, of Iowa, for President and former Confederate general, James C. Field, of Virginia, for Vice-President.

Weaver had been Greenback Labor Party presidential candidate in 1880.

In the program, the "free" money plank, which was considered of primary importance by the farmers, called for "a flexible and adequate supply of currency, to be achieved by the subtreasury plan of federal crop loans and through free coinage of silver."⁴ Also included were planks favoring a graduated income tax and government ownership and operation of railroads, telegraph and telephone utilities and postal savings banks. Privately owned national banks were to be abolished and universal suffrage as well as direct election of President, Vice-President and U. S. Senators were proposed. Pro-labor resolutions included support for a shorter working day, an eight hour work-day law, the abolition of the Pinkerton system and support for the Knights of Labor in its boycott and strike struggles. A chauvinist plank against free immigration also became part of the program.

Over a million and a quarter Blacks were organized in the Colored Farmers Alliance in 1891, and working together with the Southern Alliance, they had secured improvements for Southern Blacks.⁵ In the 1892 election campaign, in states such as Texas, Georgia, Alabama and North Carolina, active Black support was sought. Tom Watson, Georgian land-owner, bucked the Democratic Party, and, at least in words, championed the cause of the Blacks. A few years later, he flip-flopped back into the Democratic Party and became one of the South's outstanding anti-Semitic racists and redbaiters.⁶

General Weaver received a total of 1,041,577 votes, of which 471,660 were in the Western states and 374,558 in the South and Southwest. He carried Kansas, Colorado, Idaho and Nevada, with twenty electoral votes. One electoral vote accrued in Oregon and one in North Dakota. Three hundred forty-five Populist representatives were elected to state legislatures from eight Southern and ten Western states. Two were also elected from Vermont. A Populist governor won in Kansas.⁷ The fifty-third Congress, in August, 1893, included three Populist Senators and eight Populist Congressmen.

In 1894, the total vote for the People's Party (adding state

votes in a non-Presidential election year) was 1,471,590, a gain of almost 42 percent over 1892. At this time the Populists counted six United States Senators and seven Congressmen.

During 1894, the Populists organized an army of the unemployed, with members of the Socialist Labor Party taking an active part in the campaign. Jacob S. Coxey, a Populist from Massilon, Ohio, led 17 columns, originating from various areas, to Washington, on a march which was to bear his name—"Coxey's Army." Representing 3,000,000 unemployed, the marchers demanded one half billion dollars in unemployed relief, to be obtained by bonds and loans. Arrests and repression met them. "Generals" Kelly, of California, and Frye, of St. Louis in the march were also members of the SLP. Coxey's demands for the unemployed were embodied in a bill presented to the Senate by the Populist Senators, who also protested the arrests of members of Coxey's Army.⁸

De Leon considered the Populist movement as middle class and not consistent with the objectives of the SLP. He summarized his negative attitude in 1896, as follows: "... These false movements ... have confused the judgment of our people, weakened the spring of their hope, and drained their courage. Hence the existing popular apathy in the midst of popular misery, hence despondency despite unequalled opportunities for redress; hence the backwardness of the movement here when compared with that of Europe."⁹

The National Executive Committee report to the 1896 SLP convention reflected this isolationist position and predicted that Populism "will be stripped of its socialistic pretensions" when it can "attain increased strength along the lines of its true character as a middle-class movement ... It will cease to stand in our way and hinder the growth of our party in Western states, where the allurements held out by Populist politicians served to give them quite a large following from among the working class."¹⁰

De Leon had occasionally recognized that there was a section of the Populist movement which came close to socialist ideology. "The Populist movement was born in the West and only there," he said, "did it have whatever vitality it once possessed ... While

it uttered grandiloquent and unmeaning phrases on behalf of the wage workers, it talked very concrete language on behalf of the small producers, farmers especially, whose limited acreage and capital rendered them unequal to the competitive struggle."¹¹

De Leon said that while conservative Populists advocated "cheap money," other Populists in the movement supported "more genuinely radical demands, looking to the public ownership of the instruments of production."

Differences on the basic causes of the farmers' problems had grown among the Populists. "This split is becoming more and more apparent," De Leon said. "The more enlightened, or radical element ... is talking less and less about a per capita of money as THE CAUSE of prosperity or misery," turning "to the real question—the private or monopolistic ownership of machinery and all other necessities of production." The more class-conscious wing of Populism (which included Governor Lorenzo Lewelling of Kansas), commented De Leon at that time, "is moving onwards and that is bound one day to stand shoulder to shoulder with the ... Socialists."¹² But De Leon's attitude was essentially hostile to the Populists.

In the July, 1892 *North American Review*, Compers, too, expressed his antagonism. Working with the Farmers' Alliance, he said, was "undesirable" because the agrarians in the movement were "employing farmers." Compers also opposed support of the Populists in the AFL conventions, especially that of 1894. Nevertheless, approximately 300 labor candidates entered the 1894 Populist election campaign, in opposition to his express wishes.¹³

The national SLP leadership, also, found it impossible to prevent its members from becoming part of the Populist united front. One SLP member from Independence, Kansas, expressed the attitude of a large percentage of the membership when he wrote: "By working with them [the Populists] to the extent I have, and at the same time preaching the truth as I see it, I have, I think, converted most of the Populists who were not already socialists, to the true faith, and lots of my old democratic friends besides."¹⁴

The difficulty which De Leon faced in ignoring the rank and file's advocacy for a united front is apparent in a letter from Daniel DeLury, dated November, 1895. DeLury, an SLP organizer in Minneapolis, wrote Henry Kuhn a deeply troubled letter: "... Some of our members are luke-warm in enforcing Article 5, Sect. 1 of our constitution, which reads 'A number of persons may form a section, provided they acknowledge the Platform, Constitution and Resolutions of the Party *and belong to no other political party.*' As the construction given to this clause in the constitution, by the national executive will have great weight, I ask you to give a clear statement of its significance. Please notice the following classes: (1) Those who declare themselves socialists but who will go with the Populists until there is an SLP ticket in the field, (2) Those who wish to delay political action on the part of the socialists and wait until the Populists break up, so as not to *antagonize* them, (3) Those who will run on a Populist ticket (a) when there is no SLP ticket and (b) when there is an SLP ticket."

Henry Kuhn, secretary of the National Executive Committee of the SLP, after answering this letter, passed it on to De Leon, with the notation, "These questions might be taken up in the *People* under 'Answers to Correspondence'; there are many whom the shoe fits."¹⁵

Thomas J. Morgan, SLP member from Chicago, refused to accept De Leon's order to stay out of the Populist movement. He wanted to bring the unions into the Populist campaign and was widely supported within the SLP. Morgan, and a non-member of the SLP, Henry Demarest Lloyd, a well-known intellectual progressive, worked together. The united front Labor-Populist Alliance which they helped build in Illinois, served as a model for labor organizations in many states.

On May 28, 1894, the SLP, the Populists, the Illinois State Federation and other groups met at Springfield, Illinois, in a united front conference. They urged the uniting of "urban industrialists and agriculturists in one harmonious political party." The following day, in the same city, the Populist state convention took place.

A bitter fight ensued between Morgan and the Socialists against the right wing of the Peoples Party, led by Herman E. Taubeneck, the national chairman. Morgan had introduced the same eleven point program which had been discussed in several AFL conventions. The convention accepted all planks and every labor demand except Plank Ten, which called for collective ownership of the means of production. Morgan insisted on a last ditch fight for acceptance of Plank Ten, in effect demanding acceptance of socialist principles as a basis for the united front. Plank Ten remained defeated.

On July 4, 1894, at the convention called in Springfield, by the Illinois Federation of Labor, to consider political policy, Morgan and Lloyd again played a prominent part. Lloyd, a non-trade-unionist, received credentials from the socialist-inclined German Typographical Union No. 9.

Eugene Debs, who was actively agitating for a Third Farm-Labor Party, gave permission for Lloyd and other delegates to ride the train from Chicago to Springfield to attend the convention, in spite of the general strike of the American Railway Union, which he was leading.

This conference represented the highest level of the united front movement of that day. Participating were farmers, socialists, anarchists, single taxers, trade unionists, intellectuals and middle-class reformers. Morgan's Plank Ten was again presented to the assembly. Lloyd introduced a "compromise" resolution which carried, 51 to 50. "We recommend those we represent in this conference to vote for those candidates of the People's Party at the coming election who will pledge themselves to the principles of the collective ownership by the people of all such means of production and distribution as the people elect to operate for the commonwealth." The words "as the people elect to operate" were added in the compromise, as a substitute for Plank Ten.¹⁷

Following the example of the Illinois unions, the State Federations of Labor in New York, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Montana, Texas and California united with the Populist movement in similar state conferences. A number of city labor bodies in the Eastern states followed suit.¹⁸

Other SLP sections joined the Chicago organization in refusing to boycott the Populist movement. The Milwaukee, St. Louis Cleveland and Toledo sections were among those which kept their socialist membership in the Peoples Party, in spite of De Leon's directives.

The Chicago socialists entered the Populist movement wholeheartedly. The biography of Henry Demarest Lloyd, by his sister, Caro, reproduces a leaflet headed "People's Party Meeting—under the auspices of the Socialist Labor Party. Speakers: Cox and Morgan."¹⁹

Morgan was a delegate to the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance national convention in Buffalo, in 1898, where the delegates were almost evenly divided on De Leon's dual unionist, anti-AFL policies. The De Leonites showered Morgan with personal abuse.

Lloyd energetically tried to keep the various elements of the anti-monopoly Peoples Party together. He recognized the participation of Morgan and the Chicago SLP in the third party movement as a break from the sectarian past of the socialists. He wrote Clarence Darrow: "The course of the socialists in Chicago deserves sympathetic attention. Contrary to all their past politics, their predilections, and the threats and persuasions of the party's leaders elsewhere, as in New York, the Chicago socialists gave up their political identity and went in with all their might for the success of the People's Party. . . . Our cue is to get the socialists of other states to do as the Chicago socialists have done."²⁰

Lloyd urged Gompers to change his attitude. One letter he wrote pleaded for Gompers to ask Populist Governors, including Davis Waite of Colorado and Lorenzo D. Lewelling of Kansas, both supporters of labor, to unite with Compers in a call to a national conference of all "reform elements." Lloyd wrote: "What is needed in my view is a delegate assembly of all the reform elements to give immediate direction and concentration to the acts of the coming election. It should be for the whole country what the Springfield convention was for Illinois. . . . Such a convention should make terms for the workingmen with the People's Party and the SLP and the Single Taxers, that would be equal to the fruits of ten years of agitation. . . . All the voters of discontent

should unite on the candidate of the People's Party. We would revolutionize the politics of this country. The time has come for the leaders to lead. It is a great crisis. Meet it greatly."²¹

Compers did not respond.

The Populists came to grief in 1896 when the middle-class Populist leaders went back into the Democratic Party, to follow William Jennings Bryan, with his plank for free coinage of silver. The Populist movement dwindled, and in a few years died.

Decisive in the break-up was the divisive attitude of the conservative wing of the Populists. Deliberately, over a period of two years, they maneuvered to get rid of labor in the movement, turning to the business men and the free silver advocates. The Chicago Socialists, much more skilled in the united front than had been the case in the Henry George movement in 1886, still insisted, stubbornly, on acceptance of Plank Ten, and thus sharpened the split in the Populist movement. Morgan, however, did accept Lloyd's compromise and this, for a time, saved the united front.

Lloyd recognized that the split was coming, from the side of the conservative Populists.

He wrote: "To shut them [the Socialists] out would be to repeat the blunder Henry George made at the State convention in Syracuse some years ago. They were willing to cooperate with him, but to save himself from the odium of 'socialistic' affiliations, he excluded them from the convention—and he has never been heard of since as a political force. . . . If we begin to read each other out of the ranks for difference of opinion, we are lost."²²

Debs, Lloyd, Morgan and the unions tried to defeat the conservatives and maintain the Peoples Party as a third party. But they were defeated. In the course of its life, many Populists joined the SLP. Others later joined the Socialist Party, led by Debs, in the 1899-1901 period of further SLP splits.

Lloyd had recognized the significance of this united front and others to come. In a speech during the 1894 campaign, Lloyd called for closer unity of workers and farmers. "I consider a closer unity of the industrial workers with the more advanced farmers to be necessary," he said, adding ". . . in the future, the

unions should give more attention than formerly to the farmer class and seek in every possible way to draw it into common action."²³ This was a concept, unfortunately, that De Leon's "formula" omitted.

NOTES TO CHAPTER X

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 17. Caro Lloyd, *Henry Demarest Lloyd*, *Ibid.*
 18. Philip S. Foner, pp. 319, 320.
 19. Caro Lloyd, opposite p. 250.
 20. *Ibid.*, p. 254.
 21. *Ibid.*, pp. 246, 247.
 22. Philip S. Foner, p. 316.
 23. Caro Lloyd, p. 246.
- Note De Leon's *Watson on the Gridiron*, New York Labor News Co., 1926. This pamphlet is composed of a series of articles written by De Leon in 1903, in which he polemized against the views of Thomas Watson. De Leon here did not comment on the Populist movement as a mass movement. He confined himself to basic questions of Marxian economics.

CHAPTER XI

DE LEON, A FOUNDER OF THE IWW

Nine years after the collapse of the Peoples Party, and ten years after the establishment of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, Daniel De Leon again made a major mark on labor history, as one of the principle founders of the IWW.

Many contemporaries believed that his role as a prime mover in forming the IWW was the crowning achievement of his career. Arnold Petersen, his SLP biographer, called him "The father of Industrial Unionism in the United States."

The emergence of the IWW added new dimensions to the American labor movement. It demonstrated the greater effectiveness of industrial as compared to craft unionism; called attention to the need to organize the unorganized workers, particularly the unskilled; and emphasized the solidarity of the working class—foreign and American born, black and white, men and women, all races, creeds and religions.

The IWW brought new militant methods of struggle into the labor movement. Its program was unqualifiedly based on class struggle versus class collaboration. The new industrial organization afforded a common meeting ground for left wing members of the Socialist Party, militant trade unionists and Socialist Labor Party members. Some of America's most militant and hard fought strikes were conducted by the IWW. Younger labor leaders, including Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and William Z. Foster, received their baptism of fire in the labor movement in the struggles of the IWW.

Numbers of active trade unionists were turning toward industrial unionism. De Leon and the SLP threw themselves actively into this movement. Eugene V. Debs and other left wing Socialist

leaders were writing articles, discussing the advantages of such unions, which appeared in the left wing *International Socialist Review*. Anarchists and syndicalists, such as Arturo Giovannitti, declared for this concept. Enthusiastic, too, was "Big Bill" Haywood, out of the metal mines of the West, who, gun in hand, had helped build the Western Federation of Miners, in the face of unbridled employer terror.

De Leon's speeches, articles, pamphlets and editorials undoubtedly stimulated the formation of the IWW. To one of them, *Burning Question of Trades Unionism*,¹ delivered at Newark, New Jersey, in the Spring of 1904, Petersen ascribed the impetus for the calling of the preliminary conference in Chicago, in January, 1905, which arranged for the First Convention of the IWW. Frank Bohn, an SLP leader, was one of the signers of the preliminary call.

Olive Johnson, co-worker of De Leon, commented: "There was every sign of the leaders [in the movement to form the IWW] gathering their inspiration from the SLP and its literature. More copies of 'The Burning Question of Trades Unionism' were sold in a few months than had ever been the case of another SLP pamphlet . . . It proved the necessity of class conscious Socialist revolutionary unionism . . ."²

The pages of the *Daily People* reflected a number of working-class struggles, in the period before the founding of the IWW. The publication gave extensive coverage to the fight of the United Brewery Workers to preserve their union in the face of AFL bureaucracy. William Trautmann, editor of the Brewers' newspaper, a member of the Socialist Party, was brought closer to De Leon. Trautmann later became the first secretary of the IWW. The Western Federation of Miners' struggles were strongly supported in the columns of the paper. Respect for the views of the paper grew.

The first IWW convention, meeting in Chicago June 27, 1905, was hailed by left wing socialists and an appreciable number of rank and file unionists. Seventy delegates, representing 51,430 persons, had been empowered to form and become part of the new industrial union. The balance of 133 persons present were

observers, individuals or delegates who were to report back to their organizations before action was endorsed. Of those empowered to act, the Western Federation of Miners accounted for 27,000 workers; the American Labor Union, a socialist-led industrial union, for 16,750; The United Metal Workers, 3,000; the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees, 2,087; and the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, its 1,450 members. The United Brewery Workers, of Milwaukee, also sent delegates. A scattering of the delegates were socialists, members of the SPA or the SLP. Present, too, were Lucy Parsons, widow of the Haymarket martyr, Albert Parsons, and Mother Jones, rank and file organizer in basic industries of the country.

The convention also represented the sentiments of many thousands of militant workers who were not formally represented by delegates. Bill Haywood estimated that 300,000 workers were represented by the convention.³

The three outstanding convention leaders were Eugene Debs, of the Socialist Party of America; William D. Haywood, Secretary of the Western Federation of Miners and Daniel De Leon, leader of the Socialist Labor Party, who, with others also represented the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. The three men formed a powerful guiding triumvirate.

They were all agreed on the policy of dual unionism, the uselessness of the AFL, the need for revolutionary or "class struggle" unions, of industrial rather than craft organization. They felt the new union would be the economic organization of the working class which would help overthrow capitalism and become the classless administrator of the socialist society to come.

The semi-syndicalist theories which De Leon had been advocating for years became the new organization's policy. Many of the socialists and trade unionists who joined the IWW had been nurtured on these De Leonist ideas.

Haywood, who was elected permanent chairman, in opening the founding convention said: "The AFL which presumes to be the labor movement of this country, is not a working-class movement. It does not represent the working-class."⁴

Debs, in his initial speech at the convention also attacked the

AFL: "They charge us with being assembled here for the purpose of disrupting the union movement. It is already disrupted . . . the trade union movement is today under the control of the capitalist class."⁵

Debs, in rebutting the idea of "horing from within" to achieve industrial unionism within the AFL, said, "... those who believe that this form of unionism can be changed from within . . . are greatly mistaken."

At first, Debs, De Leon and Haywood eyed each other warily. Haywood summed up his feelings about the other two:

"Sitting in front of Debs was Daniel De Leon of the STLA, with badger-gray whiskers. He had been eyeing his old antagonist, Debs, furtively, and seemed charmed by what the leader of workmen had to say . . . He was the theorizing professor, while Debs was the working man who had laid down his shovel on the locomotive when he took up the work of organizing the firemen. Debs' ideas, while not clearly developed, were built upon his contact with the workers in their struggle. De Leon's only contact with the workers was through the ideas with which he wished to 'indoctrinate' them, to use his own word."⁶

This was not fair to De Leon, but was Haywood's expression of his own easier affinity with Debs, who, like himself, had been a worker and directly involved in trade union struggles.

Haywood developed a more favorable attitude towards De Leon as they worked together, the former animosities of the three leaders seemed to shrink.

"As the convention progressed," related Haywood, De Leon "seemed to get into swing of the work. He was elected on the Constitution Committee. Immediately after adjournment, he delivered an excellent speech in Minneapolis on the Preamble of the IWW, which was later brought out as a pamphlet [*The Preamble of the IWW*, later entitled *The Socialist Reconstruction of Society*]. Debs also took up the work of organization and a speech of his at Grand Central Palace, New York, was gotten out as a pamphlet. These two speeches were of great propaganda value."⁷

While Debs' speeches displayed agreement with De Leon's

trade union and Industrial Republic theories, he criticized the SLP's lack of democracy. Of the STLA, Debs said, "I have not in the past agreed with their tactics. I concede that their theory was right . . . I cheerfully admit the honesty of their membership . . . but in my judgment it does not appeal to the American working class in the right spirit . . . It seems to me that they are too prone to look upon a man as a fakir* who happens to disagree with them . . . I believe it is possible for a workingman who has been the victim of fakirism to become so alert, to so strain his vision looking for the fakir that he sees the fakir where the fakir is not . . . Fanaticism is as fatal to the development of the working-class movement as is fakirism."

However, Debs, like De Leon and Haywood, sought for unity. Debs urged that the various organizations meet in a "middle ground" and work together.⁸

De Leon answered Debs in kind, defensive, but conciliatory.

"During my whole activity in the labor movement," he said, "I have had but one foe—and I think that my worst enemy will not deny my statement—and that foe is the capitalist class." He expounded on the role of the SLP and STLA literature in preparing for the convention. On unity, he said, "We realize the necessity of united work. We realize the necessity of a united, organized movement of the working class . . ."⁹

De Leon pointed out that Compers had criticized Debs' role in leading the American Railway general strike, as well as himself and the STLA. "It makes us fraternal already," he said.

The delegates made their anti-discrimination position clear from the beginning. In his speech at the Ratification meeting, Bill Haywood attacked discrimination within the AFL and concluded: "What we want to establish at this time is a labor organization that will open wide its doors to every man that earns his livelihood either by his brain or his muscle."¹⁰

In the convention, he also called for organizing the unorganized. "There are at least twenty million unorganized workers

* The word was spelled with an "i" (fakir) in Proceedings of the Founding Convention of the IWW. In SLP literature it was spelled "faker."

in the United States of America, to say nothing of Canada. This industrial union movement is broad enough to take in all of them."¹¹

A vital issue in the labor movement at that time was immigration. Compers, supported by the right wing socialists, wanted restricted immigration, in order to maintain job superiority of the native white workers. Racism was apparent in this position. On the West Coast, the AFL leadership and right wing socialists supported the continued denial of all Japanese and Chinese immigration. The IWW met this issue head-on. At the concluding session, Haywood said, "...The organization which has been launched recognizes neither race, creed, color, sex or previous condition of servitude..."

The *North American Times*, a Japanese-language paper, printed in Seattle, editorialized, "In the American history of labor, there has never been such a union that may contain the laborers of every nationality in its membership."¹²

The Constitution Committee of the convention, of which De Leon was the leading member, proposed the issuance of a Preamble. The Preamble proposed by the committee provoked prolonged discussion, particularly around the so-called "political clause," which advocated the necessity of organization on the political [parliamentary] as well as the industrial field. De Leon, though he fought for the retention of this clause, agreed to water it down, because he felt that the industrial union was by far the more important organization and political activity, in fact, of minor importance.¹³

In the lively debate on the clause, De Leon emphasized the importance of the industrial union to the working class. "The 'taking and the holding' of the things that labor needs to be free can never depend upon a political party," he said. "...It is out of the question that here in America... a political party can accomplish that which this clause demands, the 'taking and the holding'..."

"Unless there is Might behind the Right (of the ballot), your Right is something to laugh at." The "Might" is the industrial union. Those who expect to bring about socialist revolution

through a political party, said De Leon, are "mooncalves," "ballot maniacs," "Possibilists."¹⁴ Here De Leon confused (as he very often did) "Political Party" with election work or parliamentarism.

The Preamble, as adopted, expressed socialist working class principles, as follows: "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few who make up the employing class have all the good things of life. Between these two classes a struggle must go on, until all the toilers come together on the political, as well as on the industrial field and take and hold that which they produce by their labor, through economic organization of the working class, without affiliation to any political party." The final phrase was a concession made by De Leon and his followers to the syndicalists, who feared that the Socialist Party or the SLP might control the new union.

Immediately after adjournment, De Leon delivered a speech on the Preamble, in Minneapolis, July 10, 1905.¹⁵ His address, on the whole, expressed the views of the IWW, including war on the AFL, affirmation of the class struggle, industrial unionism, and the relegation of the political party of socialism to a secondary role, as compared to the economic organization, which would administer the new socialist society when it came. It was, in essence, De Leon's socialist theory, expressed repeatedly by him, from 1896 to his death. Thus:

"... A part, the better, the constructive part of Socialist economics, translates itself into the industrial organization of the working-class; it translates itself into that formation that outlines the mold of the future social system; another part of Socialist economics, however, inevitably, translates itself into politics; it inevitably takes that form that matches capitalist methods."

What if the political arm of labor wins an election in which capitalism is defeated at the polls? "What should there be for them to do? Simply to adjourn themselves on the spot, sine die. Their work would be done by disbanding..." The political state will disappear, immediately, and the Industrial Union will henceforth administer the country.

"... Where the GEB (General Executive Board) of the IWW will sit, there will be the nation's capital." ¹⁶

After the first convention, Debs defended De Leon, the strongest criticism coming from the right wing of the Socialist Party.

"De Leon is sound on the question of trade unionism," Debs stated, "And to that extent, whether I like him or not personally, I am with him... opposition to the IWW, inspired by hatred for Daniel De Leon and the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance is puerile to say the least... Most of the opposition to the IWW is centered upon the head of Daniel De Leon and has a purely personal animus." ¹⁷

The first split in leadership took place during the second convention of the IWW, meeting in Chicago, September 17, 1906. Ninety-three delegates represented 60,000 members, including the membership of the Western Federation of Miners. Reportedly, 394 charters had been issued. Haywood was now in jail as the result of a frame-up of the leadership of the Western Federation of Miners by the metal mining barons. ¹⁸ The WFM, lacking his leadership, had begun a move to the right.

President Charles O. Sherman, supported largely by the right wing and centrist socialists and the right wing of the WFM, demanded that all political agitation be kept out of the local unions and all literature "bearing on any complexion of a political nature should be barred from any economic industrial meeting." ¹⁹ Sherman was defeated by a coalition of De Leon, Vincent St. John of the Western Federation of Miners, and William Trautmann, and their followers, a loosely unified grouping of De Leonites, left socialists, syndicalists and anarchists.

Deposed as general president, Sherman bitterly blamed De Leon. He charged, "The convention was controlled by the members of the SLP under the leadership of Daniel De Leon." Later, he added: "Not a vote was cast on any important matter in this so-called convention until De Leon had been consulted." ²⁰

"The danger was great," summarized De Leon, in his speech at the adjournment of the 1906 convention. "The conspiracy was deep laid... It was a conspiracy to squelch the revolution in this convention, and to start over again another AFL."

The Western Federation of Miners soon withdrew from the IWW. The now right-center leadership of the Socialist Party, revealed full support for Sherman, in the Seventh International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart, in 1907, where Morris Hillquit and Secretary J. Mahlon Barnes submitted a report: "Several months before the Second Convention, the Alliance (STLA) under the direction of the adroit chief of the SLP, Daniel De Leon, planned to take possession of the administration of the IWW and by means of a skillful manipulation of the delegates, succeeded in obtaining a majority for itself in the convention. The STLA, indeed, dominated the convention." ²¹

At this convention, De Leon further watered down the political clause, because of the still diminishing role he himself relegated to the political party. The compromise agreed that the word "political" should remain in the clause. However, a new clause was added after the Preamble: "Therefore, without endorsing any political party or desiring the endorsement of any political party, we unite under the following constitution..."

The Third convention, opening September 16, 1907, manifested less disagreement than the 1906 convention. The De Leon, St. John, Trautmann leadership was not seriously challenged. Fifty-three delegates were present, representing 74 locals. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was among the delegates. A motion to strike out the "Political Clause" was overwhelmingly defeated by a vote of 113 to 15.

At the fourth convention in 1908, with St. John and Trautmann leading the fight, the IWW split on the basis of the "Political Clause." De Leon was denied his seat as a delegate, on the technical ground that he was a member of the wrong local union. The Political Clause was finally removed from the constitution, and the purely syndicalist and anarchist elements in the organization took over leadership. They represented, on the whole, migratory workers and scattered industries, including lumber, principally from the West.

De Leon, who was granted the floor to state his case, angrily warned the convention against "slumism" and "anarchy." De Leon's followers and representatives of locals which supported

the Political Clause met in Paterson, New Jersey, November 1, 1908. There they repudiated the actions of the Chicago convention and established a dual IWW, with headquarters in Detroit. First named the Detroit IWW, in 1915, the name was changed to the Workers International Industrial Union. Olive Johnson contended that De Leon did not want to support this rival organization, but was overruled by other SLP leaders.²²

Before the split, during November and December, 1906 and January and February, 1907, De Leon had opened the columns of the *People* to a discussion with the anarchists and syndicalists. In a series of questions and answers, he defended his position. This discussion was later printed by the SLP in a pamphlet, *As To Politics*. De Leon repeated the semi-syndicalist ideas of his previous writings and the Minneapolis speech.

Two of those participating in the polemics, Arturo Giovannitti, the anarchist poet and trade union organizer, and John Sandgren, of San Francisco, quoted Arturo Labriola, one of the world's leading exponents of the syndicalist position and a member of the Italian Socialist Party, as their syndicalist authority against political parties and political action—before or after the revolution.

In reply, De Leon did not criticize Labriola's syndicalist position. Since Labriola was a member of the Socialist Party of Italy, he said, he must be considered political. "The sentiments in the quotation from Labriola are not different from those of the SLP..." The fact was that the Socialist Party, both in Italy and the United States, contained varying ideologies, including syndicalism and opportunism. This conciliatory position toward a world renowned syndicalist encouraged the syndicalists in the IWW in their campaign against any revolutionary political party.²³

The loss of De Leon and the SLP members from the IWW weakened it. In 1908, when the split took place, however, the Chicago IWW still had ahead of it important history-making struggles.

Bill Haywood had been in jail during the 1907 convention. On his release, after touring the United States, he visited Europe where he met many labor leaders. When he returned, in late

1908, he became an IWW organizer, later becoming General Organizer and then General Secretary-Treasurer of the IWW. The Western Federation of Miners expelled him, on his refusal to quit the IWW.

The time was ripe for organizing the unorganized and Haywood brought to this project his great talent for leadership and organization, which changed the character of the IWW. New methods were introduced into labor struggles—free speech fights, mass demonstrations, mass picketing, slow-downs, and the tactic in which strikers remained inside the factory—today's "sit-ins." The IWW organized not only the Western migratory and lumber workers but invaded such concentrated eastern industries as textile, silk and rubber.

Under Haywood's guidance, the IWW demonstrated the power of the solidarity of industrial unionism in its strike struggles in the metal mines of Goldfield, Nevada; in Butte, Montana; in the textile mills of Lawrence, Massachusetts; in Paterson and Passaic, New Jersey; in the sawmills of the West, among the lumber workers, the migratory agricultural workers and elsewhere.

The IWW carried into life its early declared principles of working class solidarity, fighting against discrimination because of race, creed, color or nationality. It was among the first unions to give attention to organization of small farmers. It fought for the rights of women and youth. With De Leon still in active leadership, a resolution was carried at the second convention to make special inducements to "female and junior" members through lower dues.²⁴

For three years, the Socialist Party left wing and the SLP leaders had worked together in the IWW. This was the basis for the development of a strong movement for unity within the membership of the two Socialist parties which lasted for years.

James Connolly, the Irish socialist writer, labor leader, and later, martyr, who came to the United States in 1903 to work in the SLP and American labor movement, was instrumental in giving impetus to this movement. Through his efforts, a united front United Labour Council had been formed in Newark and vicinity.

He commented, "Working together in the new organization, SLP and SPA members began to lose their mutual hostility . . ." ²⁵

The Manifesto of the New Jersey State Unity Conference could very well have been written by De Leon himself, since it contained the main principles stated in his Minneapolis speech. SLP and SPA delegates jointly endorsed this position. A referendum, held by the Socialist Party of America, however, defeated the unity program and the conferences, organized in areas throughout the country, were broken off.

An unhappy by-product of the formation of the IWW was the abandonment of the leadership of the Western Federation of Miners to conservatives and the subsequent wrecking of the union. William Z. Foster called it, "One of the great tragedies caused by dual unionism . . ." ²⁶

A similar negative result took place in the Socialist Party. The left wing enthusiastically joined the IWW, neglecting work in the Socialist Party. These militants virtually abandoned the organization to the right wing. The leadership of the Socialist Party changed from Center-Left to Right-Center, in the very years when Debs, Haywood and other Socialist Party leaders were active in the IWW. ²⁷

The dominant Right-Center coalition began to expel supporters of the IWW from its ranks. Trautmann, among others, was expelled for "treasonable conduct." Debs was attacked by Berger and others and was not given important posts in the party for years. However, because of his great prestige with the workers, they did not dare expel him.

The splits and purges in the Socialist Party culminated in the split of 1912, when Bill Haywood was removed from the National Executive Committee. He finally dropped out of the Socialist Party and confined his activities to the IWW.

During the life of the organization, the IWW activists were confronted by intensive state and police action. During and after World War I, the IWW anti-war position was countered by bloody terror, by government and employer vigilantes, accompanied by the howls of the press. Hundreds of active IWW members were jailed; many were deported; some were murdered. In

the West, the lumber barons determined to destroy the effective lumber union organized by the IWW. Murderous raids and lynchings were initiated in Centralia and Everett, Washington, and in Butte, Montana. In many cities, notably Chicago, Wichita and Sacramento, mass trials of IWW members were conducted. Hundreds were found "guilty" of sedition, or other vague charges. The 1919 Palmer "Red Raids" again gathered in IWW members; many more were deported. The IWW, under this onslaught, dwindled in activity and size.

It had contributed a great chapter to American labor history, and the tactics it fostered affected American labor for years to come.

De Leon, a principal founder, thus made a rich contribution to the militancy of American labor struggles, the effects of which continued into the years which followed the demise of the IWW and beyond his own death.

In the course of organizing the IWW, De Leon had also played an effective part in another powerful united front movement—the nationwide defense movement against the frame-up of "Big Bill" Haywood and other WFM leaders who were in jail at Boise, Idaho, charged with murder.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XI

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CHAPTER XII

DE LEON LEADS A UNITED FRONT

Less than a year after the IWW was formed, in Denver, on February 19, 1906, Bill Haywood, Secretary-Treasurer of the Western Federation of Miners; Charles Moyer, President; and George Pettibone, a friend of the union, were separately kidnapped. Special deputies forcibly put them aboard a train to Boise, Idaho. There they were summarily charged with murder. There was no semblance of due process of law in the seizure of the three men.

The Governor of Idaho, Frank Stenness, had viciously fought the union and originated widespread use of the "bull pen," forerunner of the concentration camp. On December 31, 1905, he had been killed in the yard of his home by a bomb. In a union smashing move, the attempt was made to pin this crime on the leaders of the WFM.

One of the most powerful united front defense movements in American labor history came to the aid of the accused men. From the beginning, De Leon became one of its outstanding leaders. Government, the mine owners and the newspapers made massive attempts to discredit them as "bomb-throwing anarchists" and rally national support for the death sentence.

James McParland, labor spy, who had acted against the Molly Maguires, in the coal fields of Pennsylvania, now was head of the Pinkerton Agency's Denver office. Offering a helping hand to the Idaho authorities, he obtained a "confession" from Harry Orchard, a mentally twisted agent provocateur and spy for the Mine Owners' Association.

Orchard had already committed virtually every known crime—including bigamy, arson, burglary, larceny, fraud and murder.

The unsavory list was to be augmented by sabotage and dynamiting for the mine owners. Orchard claimed that the Western Federation of Miners had incited him to murder Stenness, in revenge for brutal attacks against the strikers of Coeur d'Alene six years earlier.¹

Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone were held in the Caldwell, Idaho prison eighteen months without trial, though no evidence against them was ever produced. A habeas corpus proceeding was denied by the Courts.

Using a battery of so-called "experts," the prosecution depicted Orchard as a reformed murderer who had become a Christian, through the efforts of McParland.²

Rank and file workers, trade unionists, socialists, and many middle-class professionals were shocked by the lawless kidnapping and the subsequent murder charge. Haywood was not only a leader of the Western Federation of Miners, with its 27,000 members, but was also a leader of the IWW and an outstanding member of the Socialist Party.

The second convention of the IWW, held while Haywood and the others were in jail, displayed deep concern with the frame-up. The General Office, in Chicago, mailed thousands of letters requesting contributions for defense of the men and received a tremendous response.

Paul F. Brissenden, one of those who first chronicled the history of the IWW in America, wrote; "This, labor's common extremity, did actually, though but temporarily, achieve that miracle (to appear later in San Diego and Lawrence) of the I.W.W.'s, Socialists, Socialist Laborites, Anarchists, and 'Pure and Simplers' even, cooperating in a common activity. The I.W.W. was the first to organize protest meetings, and secured the services of Clarence S. Darrow for the legal defense. The slogan 'Shall Our Brothers Be Murdered?' was reiterated on every hand, and made the watchword of the defense."³

With every resource at his command, De Leon flung himself into the defense of the WFM leaders.⁴ He, determinedly, geared the *Daily People* and organized the SLP sections for intensive activity which helped bring forth the largest and most

effective protest movement American labor had experienced. It was one of the most fruitful campaigns in SLP history.

The united front character of the defense was described by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. "Defense conferences which were delegate bodies, from Socialist and Socialist Labor Party locals, IWW and AFL unions and workers' fraternal organizations were set up and met regularly."⁵

Nation-wide demonstrations, parades and protest meetings denounced the frame-up. Fifty thousand marchers paraded in Chicago. On May Day, 1907, 20,000 persons assembled on Boston Common; in New York City, a demonstration took place with Elizabeth Gurley Flynn as one of the speakers.⁶

The SLP remained proud of the role of De Leon, its party and its publications in the united front defense. Rudolph Katz, De Leon's co-worker, later described the SLP activity and said, "... The *Daily People* was the first paper to come out boldly and unhesitatingly in favor of the three accused men and against the foul conspiracy of the mine owners and their political hirelings... De Leon's articles and editorials were the real call to arms to the working class."⁷

The left and rank and file Socialist Party members rallied. Herman Titus, of the *Toledo Socialist*, moved his paper to Caldwell, Idaho, shortly after the arrests, in order to help the defense.

The *Socialist Appeal to Reason*, printed in Kansas, issued a special edition of 4,000,000 copies, containing an appeal by Eugene Debs, "Arouse Ye Slaves. Their Only Crime was Loyalty to the Working Class."

In contrast was the lack of activity of the right-wing Socialists. The newspapers controlled by them reduced coverage of the case to almost nothing and thoroughly underplayed its importance. Victor Berger characterized the matter as an "episode," a "border feud" between the Western Federation of Miners and the mine owners. He advised, "They would be freed if the Socialist Party and organized labor would act with sufficient restraint as not to arouse the entire capitalist class."⁸

The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party voted down a motion, proposed by many locals, to call a na-

tional conference of socialists and labor for support of the defense movement. They also ignored the urgent calls for funds.

Haywood, while still in jail, ran for Governor of Colorado on the Socialist ticket. Sixteen thousand votes were acknowledged to have been cast for him. The Colorado Socialist Labor Party, at De Leon's call, did not run an SLP candidate, but supported Haywood. This was the only time in its history that the SLP endorsed the candidate of another party.

When the case finally came to trial, the prosecution's case faded. Haywood was tried first. The prosecutor was William Borah, later to become a Senator. Clarence Darrow defended Haywood. The testimony of the principal witness, Harry Orchard, was refuted. He was to die in prison in 1954, a self-confessed murderer. Haywood was acquitted on July 28, 1907. Moyer was released without trial. Pettibone was tried later and found not guilty.

After his release, Haywood toured the country under the auspices of the Socialist Party and the labor organizations which had defended him.⁹ He commented on the defense movement, "If the slogan 'United Front' had existed then, it would have applied to the solidarity of the workers in our case."¹⁰

The Socialist Congress, of the Second International, then in session at Stuttgart, resolved, "The class conscious proletariat of Europe looks upon the enormous strength manifested by this act of solidarity as a guarantee of unity for the future and hopes that the American proletariat will show the same solidarity and determination in the fight for its complete emancipation."¹¹

The same pitch of unity, however, was not maintained by Haywood. When De Leon, after Haywood's release, called on him to take leadership of a unified socialist movement, Haywood declined. De Leon's letter to Haywood is a self critical attempt to set forth, objectively who and what the Socialist movement needed.

He said, in part: "The capitalist class has again wrought better for the Social Revolution than that class is aware—it has, through your now celebrated case, built you up for the work of unifying the Movement upon solid ground." De Leon ex-

plained that he, scarred in too many past struggles, could not play the unifying role. "The capitalist class, through this late persecution of you has 'produced' the unifier... the Socialist who is unencumbered by animosities inseparable from the early stages of the struggle... Thanks to your own antecedents, your celebrated case, the unanimity of the working class in your behalf and your triumphant vindication, the capitalist class has itself hatched out the needed leader. The capitalist class has thrown the ball into your hands. You can kick it over the goal."¹²

De Leon, clearly, was trying to make permanent the powerful unity which had been forged around Haywood's case. Haywood did not answer this letter, due, he says in his book, to his disillusionment with De Leon's "prejudices."

The SLP, he said, was "so completely dominated by De Leon's prejudices that it could not lend strength to any movement with which it became associated. Whether right or wrong, De Leon always insisted he was right. He made it impossible for any except his devotees to work with him. One able man after another had to leave him."¹³

The powerful coalition was not to be continued. Unity of the three leaders of the IWW, Debs, De Leon and Haywood, which had reached its high point in the successful achievements of labor and its friends in the Haywood case, from this point deteriorated.

Debs had stayed away from the IWW conventions. Haywood, as leader of the IWW, while organizing the unorganized and leading strikes, was, meanwhile, taking an active part in the debates against opportunist Socialist Party leaders.

De Leon also was opposing these same leaders (Berger, Hillquit, etc.) and turned attention in this struggle to the international arena—the international socialist congresses. Some of De Leon's most important speeches and writings were the result of his opposition to the world right wing socialists in the international congresses of the Second International. Here he again crossed swords with Hillquit and the Bernstein revisionists, both American and European.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XII

1. Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1952, pp. 323 ff.
2. Ibid., p. 324.
3. Paul F. Brissenden, *The IWW, A Study of American Syndicalism*, New York, Russell and Russell, 1957, pp. 170-175.
4. Olive M. Johnson and Henry Kuhn, *The Socialist Labor Party During Four Decades, 1890-1930*, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1931, p. 68.
5. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *I Speak My Own Piece*, New York, Masses and Mainstream, 1955, pp. 60-63.
6. Ibid.
7. Rudolph Katz, *A Symposium, "Daniel De Leon, The Man and His Work,"* part 2, "With De Leon Since '89," New York, NEC, SLP, Republished 1934, pp. 119, 120.
8. Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement*, Ibid.
9. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *I Speak My Own Piece*, Ibid.
10. William D. Haywood, *The Autobiography of Big Bill Haywood*, New York, International Publishers, 1929, p. 205.
11. Ibid., p. 220.
12. Ibid., p. 221. See also *A Symposium, Daniel De Leon*, part I, pp. 59-61.
13. William D. Haywood, *The Autobiography of Big Bill Haywood*, pp. 220-222.

For an absorbing account of Bill Haywood's trial, in the summer of 1907, see his *Autobiography*, Chapters 12, "Undesirable Citizens" and 13, "The Boise Trial."

CHAPTER XIII

AGAINST REVISIONISM AND RACISM IN THE
SECOND INTERNATIONAL

The Socialist parties of Europe were undergoing inner struggles over divergent ideologies, similar to developments in the United States. In the Second International, these struggles were basically around the concepts of Edward Bernstein, of the German Social-Democratic Party, the theoretical leader of the right wing in the International.

As early as 1898 he had written a letter to the party's convention, challenging Marx's entire revolutionary theory. He renounced Marx's theories of surplus value, the class struggle and the materialist conception of history. He and his fellow parliamentarians wanted to "vote" Socialism into being. His book, *Evolutionary Socialism*, made peace with imperialism and colonialism and endorsed class collaboration. Many Christian and Utopian Socialists followed his lead.

Alexander Millerand, the French Socialist who agreed with Bernsteinism, without consultation with his party, accepted in 1899, the Minister of Commerce post in the Waldeck-Rousseau cabinet. Here he served with Gallifet, who had carried out the butchering of thousands of Paris Communards. This government was soon ordering its police to shoot striking workers in Martinique and Chalons.¹

Millerand's action precipitated a long period of inner turmoil and sharp dissent in the Second International. The right wing, including Bernstein, and Jean Jaures in France, supported Millerand, with the argument that the capitalists would see the error of their ways, abdicate voluntarily, and peacefully turn power over to the socialists. De Leon clashed with this opportunist ideology.

In October, 1889, the Socialist Labor Party's national convention had formally moved to join the Second International, which had held its founding conference in July of that year. In 1893, De Leon attended the International Socialist Conference in Zurich, Switzerland. Afterwards, he was a delegate from the SLP to Second International Congresses at Amsterdam in 1904, Stuttgart in 1907, and Copenhagen in 1910. He became part of the loose left wing of the international socialist movement which was combatting the rising tide of opportunism. This group included Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin, of Germany, Jules Guesde of France, George Plechanoff and Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin, of Russia, and Christian Rakovsky, of Bulgaria.

De Leon observed with concern the growth of Millerandism. In an editorial in the *Daily People*, October 22, 1900, De Leon proclaimed Millerand's responsibility for the "cold blooded slaughter" of the Martinique and Chalon strikers, through continued participation in the cabinet.

"The theory of 'Cabinet Government,'" he wrote, "is that the collective act of the Cabinet is the individual act of all its members, and that the individual act of any one member is the act of all. The Cabinet Minister who refuses to shoulder responsibility for any act of his colleagues, resigns—if he does not resign, he approves."²

Millerand, instead of resigning, reiterated his denial of the class struggle and stated "Love, not hatred will emancipate the working class."

The international right wing support of Millerandism was voted down in the Stuttgart national convention of the German party in 1898, in Hanover in 1899 and in Dresden in 1903. However, opportunist theory in the Second International remained and flourished. In large measure, this was due to the role played by the influential centrist, Karl Kautsky, who with his followers indulged in pseudo-revolutionary phraseology while, in essence, endorsing right wing theories, consequently permitting them to develop.

De Leon's polemics against the right wingers and Karl

Kautsky, the centrist, in the Amsterdam Congress, are reflected in the book, *Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress*, printed in 1906.³

The debates of Rosa Luxemburg against the right wing at the Congress won his admiration, as did also a speech of Christian Rakovsky, calling for expulsion of the right wingers. He devoted a chapter to the Russian, Plechanoff, then a Marxist.

At Paris, in 1900, Kautsky had introduced a typically evasive resolution in the meetings of the Second International. This had ostensibly criticized class collaboration. Characteristically, the resolution had so many escape clauses and reservations that the right wing found the resolution acceptable. It became the platform of the revisionists for a number of years. In 1904, it was reintroduced into the Amsterdam World Congress.

The "Kautsky Resolution" utilized clauses in its "tenter-totter" position such as "Whether in a particular case, the political situation necessitates this dangerous experiment [of entering bourgeois cabinets] is a question of tactics and not of principle. The International Congress has not to declare itself upon this point, but in any case the participation of a Socialist in a capitalist government does not hold out the hope of good results for the militant proletariat, unless a great majority of the Socialist Party approves of such an act and the Socialist minister remains the agent of his party..."⁴

The SLP delegates, including Lucien Sanial, had voted against the Kautsky resolution in the Paris Congress. However, it had carried 29 to 9. The American Socialist Party delegation, led by Morris Hillquit, had voted with Kautsky.

By 1904, at Amsterdam, the corruption represented by Millerandism had so obviously departed far from accepted Socialist theory, that the picture had changed.

De Leon, at the Congress, attacked Kautsky's position: "Kautsky just stated that his resolution contemplated only an extreme emergency, a war for instance, and that he never could or did contemplate the case of a Socialist sitting in a Cabinet alongside of a Gallifet. He says so. We must believe him. But

while he was contemplating the distant, the imaginary possibility of a war that was not in sight, everybody else at the Paris Congress had in mind a thing that WAS in sight, a thing that was palpitating and throbbing with a feverish pulse; aye, a spectacle under which the very opening of the Paris Congress was thrown into convulsions... It was the very spectacle and fact of a Socialist sitting in a cabinet, cheek by jowl, not merely with A but *THE* Callifet..."

He continued, "I have here in my satchel, the official report of the Dresden convention [of the German Social Democratic Party]. In his speech therein recorded, Kautsky says himself that Auer, the spokesman of the German delegation in favor of the Kautsky resolution, said when speaking for the resolution 'We in Germany have not yet a Millerand; we are not yet so far; but I hope we may soon be so far...'"

De Leon called this a "malodorous enormity that was humping against their noses and shocking the Socialist conscience of the world."⁵

He pointed to the degeneration of the position of the French Socialist, Jean Jaures, under the blight of Millerandism. "From being at first only silently passive... from subsequently seeking to ignore the responsibility of Millerand for the ministerial acts of the slaughter of the Chalon and Martinique working men on strike; from such seemingly slight beginnings, Jauresism presently rushed headlong down its course. It extenuated Millerand's actions; boisterously upheld them; earned the praises and even a decoration from the Muscovite aristocrat, that monstrosity of our day that combines the reckless bloodthirstiness of the barbarian with the vices and hypocritical pretences of civilization. It went further. It accepted for Jaures himself, at the hands of bourgeois deputies, a vice-presidency in the chambers. It went still further. It merged into a bourgeois ministerial 'bloc' turned its press into semi-official mouthpieces of a subsequent wholly bourgeois ministry, and finally it capped the climax by voting the ministerial budget, the appropriations for the army and navy included."⁶

The "Kautsky Resolution" was repudiated by the Amsterdam

Congress. Adopted by a majority vote was the "Dresden-Amsterdam" resolution. It stated, in part: "The Congress repudiates to the fullest extent possible, the efforts of the revisionists which have for their object the modification of our tried and victorious policy, based on the class war and the substitution, for the conquest of political power by an unceasing attack on the bourgeoisie, of a policy of concession to the established order of society."

"The consequence of such revisionist tactics would be to turn a party... revolutionary in the best sense of the word, into a party satisfied with the reform of bourgeois society."⁷ This resolution threw a face-saving sop to the Kautskyite centrists, by inserting a phrase that the resolution was in line with that of Kautsky.

De Leon had at first introduced a resolution of his own which rejected the Kautsky resolution completely and baldly. Finding little support for this non-diplomatic presentation, he supported the successful Dresden resolution.

The right wing's resolution had, in general words, spoken of the "glorious tasks of the class war" and confirmed the "Kautsky resolution passed at the International Congress of Paris in 1900."

This right-wing resolution came to the vote before the Dresden resolution. It received a tie vote, 21 to 21, and thus was declared defeated. It once again served to reveal the growing power of the right wing in the Second International.

The struggles by the left wing against the opportunists were to be intensified in the Second International in 1914. With the outbreak of World War I, in August of that year, a number of European and American socialists, exhibiting their "patriotism" declared their support for the war. They furthered the imperialist designs of their own governments and charged the rival imperialist powers with responsibility for the war. This chauvinism sounded the break-up of the Second International, and the eventual founding of the Third Communist International, influenced by the November, 1917 Russian Soviet revolution.

De Leon's persistent opposition to revisionism in the Sec-

ond International was that of an uncompromising and incorruptible warrior for principles of solidarity, internationalism, race equality, and the Marxist path to the workers' future. However, De Leon's criticism of opportunism at Amsterdam was marked by a singular exception. The German Social Democratic leadership was excused by him for opportunism, on the basis that within Germany the socialists had remnants of feudalism facing them. The opportunist clauses in the Kautsky resolution, he maintained, applied, perhaps, to countries "not yet wholly freed from feudal institutions," such as monarchist Germany, where the Junker landowner class was in power. The United States and France had wholly wiped out feudalism, he contended, and, hence, reformism in these advanced capitalist countries was wrong. But in countries which "present the phenomenon of two ruling classes, hence also political systems, simultaneously in existence; the older, the feudal still dominant... the younger, the capitalist, pressingly assertive... In countries so circumstanced, the 'cooperation of the classes' as the term now runs, is not excluded..."⁸ In several chapters of his book, "Flashlights," De Leon excused opportunist lapses as acceptable.⁹

De Leon had no concept that there could be a program of democratic reforms as part of a program in which socialist theories were presented. This was a mistake, particularly for Germany, where the working class had developed its class consciousness. German industry was growing and a strong mass socialist party existed. In these circumstances, De Leon accepted a theory which was a repudiation of the theoretical struggle which Marx and Engels had waged for many years against Lassalleism and other forms of opportunism in the German party.

On this erroneous position on the need for reformist theories for undeveloped countries, and that the most highly developed countries, industrially, would experience the revolution first, Lenin, later, offered clarification. With the Russian Revolution a fact, Lenin explained that the revolution takes place not in the most industrially advanced country in the world, but (1) in the country where the working class is

strongest, (2) the capitalists are weakest and in the deepest crisis, and (3) where exists the "weakest link" in the chain of world imperialism. Even though a monarchy, with many feudal aspects, Russia, due to incredible casualties and suffering as a result of the war, and the corruption and callous exploitation and brutality of the Czarist government, was ripe for socialist revolution.¹⁰

De Leon had applauded the Russian Bolsheviks during his participation in the international socialist conferences. In *Flashlights*, he commented, "*Iskra*, the organ of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, wittily satirized both author and [Kautsky] resolution as the Kaoutchouc (India rubber) resolution."¹¹

The dissension in the Second International reflected the disagreements in the United States between De Leon and the left wing SPA members, on the one hand, and the right wing socialists, tied in with the AFL bureaucracy, on the other. This was particularly apparent on the question of immigration into the United States. This subject was discussed at Amsterdam.

Van Koll, of the Holland delegation, presented a proposition advocating the restriction of "inferior races" into America.¹² This was the same position that was strongly advocated by the leadership of the AFL and the "aristocracy of labor" which claimed that unrestricted immigration would create a force of non-union labor which would lower the wages of union members. Inside the Socialist Party, such leaders as Max Hayes were preaching this Gompers philosophy. The left wing socialists demanded that immigrants should be welcomed and organized into the unions, without discrimination.

De Leon succeeded in heading off Van Koll's resolution.

"The Committee on Emigration and Immigration [at Amsterdam]," wrote De Leon "elaborated the matter, and finally a proposition was formally introduced bearing six signatures, those of H. Schlueter, Morris Hillquit and Algernon Lee [American Socialist Party members] among the lot. This proposition ingeniously dropped the word 'inferior' and substituted it with the word 'backward' races, and sought to explain it by placing in

parentheses the words 'such as Chinese, Negroes, etc.'" De Leon was thoroughly outraged at this racist attitude.

"Where is the line that separates 'inferior' from 'superior' races?" asked De Leon. "What serious man, if he is a Socialist, what Socialist, if he is a serious man, would indulge in 'etc' in such important matters? To the native American proletariat, the Irish was made to appear an 'inferior' race; to the Irish, the German; to the German, the Italian; to the Italian—and so down the line through the Swedes, the Poles, the Jews, the Armenians, the Japanese, to the end of the gamut. Socialism knows not such insulting iniquitous distinctions as 'inferior' and 'superior' races among the proletariat. It is for capitalism to fan the fires of such sentiments in its scheme to keep the proletariat divided... Upon the howl raised in the Congress, the proposition was withdrawn."¹³

The proponents of race equality and unrestricted immigration had won out in the 1904 International Socialist Congress, but in the Socialist Party conventions in the United States, the question of the AFL hierarchy's championship of restricted immigration continued to be a source of contention between left and right wing.

The formal position of the Socialist Party, fashioned by its right wing, which had gained control, and aided by the centrists, remained a racist one.

In March, 1907, the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party adopted an anti-immigration resolution. This so-called centrist "compromise" was forwarded to the 1907 Stuttgart Congress as the position of the Socialist Party of America. Authored by Hillquit, it paid lip service to the condition of political refugees.

The resolution adopted the AFL anti-immigration position. It asked the International to "combat with all means at their command, the willful importation of cheap foreign labor calculated to destroy labor organizations, to lower the standard of living of the working class and to retard the ultimate realization of socialism."

De Leon wrote of the new attempt: "In the committee which

considered it, the SLP proved documentarily that it was economically and politically an echo of the scabherding AFL. The resolution was roundly routed and another resolution denouncing the noxious propaganda of anti-immigration was adopted by the Congress."¹⁴

De Leon had earned the political enmity of Morris Hillquit who, consequently, for a number of years attempted to have him unseated as a member of the American delegation to the International Socialist Bureau. Rosa Luxemburg was one of those responsible for Hillquit's failure. On one occasion, she replied to a Hillquit speech in the Bureau: "The leading feature of Hillquit's speech is an inextricable contradiction to me... I do not understand how, if the Socialist Party is as large as it claims and the Socialist Labor Party consists of De Leon only, one single man could so tremendously hurt 53,375 members?"

Though De Leon was retained as a delegate, 13 of the 14 U. S. delegates' votes were allocated to the Socialist Party. Thirteen delegates had voted that the Socialist Party was entitled to two extra seats, which were removed from the Socialist Labor Party. Ten members voted with De Leon. De Leon commented: "A European wit who was present remarked that what gave the Socialist Party that majority of three was the speech of Rosa Luxemburg; that she, being violently hated by the nationalists of Eastern Europe, whatever side she took, they took the opposite. I answered that I would rather have one vote for the Socialist Labor Party with Rosa Luxemburg's speech than our former three without the speech."¹⁵

When the debates on the anti-immigration resolutions in the Socialist Party of America conventions in the United States are studied, it is not difficult to discover why the Socialist Party failed to attract in that period many Black workers and newly arrived foreign-born.

Victor Berger denounced the resolution against restricted immigration which had been adopted at Stuttgart. He said the United States and Canada should be kept "white man's" country.¹⁶ In December, 1907, he warned if something were not

done, "This country is absolutely sure to become a black and yellow country within a few generations."¹⁷

In the 1908 Socialist Party convention, Ernest Untermann, one of the theoreticians of the right wing-center group said: "I am determined that my race shall be supreme in this country and in the world."¹⁸

Max Hayes, seconded by Untermann, contended that the slogan "Workers of the World Unite" was sixty years old and out of date.

The Socialist Party leadership had continually ignored or insulted the more than 20,000 foreign-born members who had been organized in language federations within the Socialist Party. Many of the members of such federations, composed largely of workers, were not able to participate in Socialist Party decisions because they could not afford the double dues payments required by the federations and the SPA.

Immigration again appeared on the agenda of the 1910 Socialist Party Congress. After debate, Hillquit introduced a resolution, similar to his anti-immigration resolutions of the past, although it presumably was a substitute resolution. It carried 55 to 50.

Eugene Debs, although he publicly championed the left wing, did little, organizationally, to strengthen its position within the Socialist Party. He thought by abstaining from inner factions, he could have a unifying effect on the party.

De Leon, while always sharply attacking the racists, mistakenly agreed with Debs that race equality was no *special* question, apart from the achievement of Socialism. Neither De Leon nor Debs proposed special programs to champion the rights of Black people or for race equality. Special demands on behalf of Blacks—against lynching, social discrimination, for democratic and civil rights—De Leon considered unnecessary.¹⁹

Debs felt he could not keep silent at the orgy of white chauvinism displayed in the Socialist Party's 1910 convention. He struck sharply at the right wing in the issue of the *International Review* of July, 1910: "The plea that certain races are to be excluded because of tactical expediency should have no place

in a proletarian gathering under the auspices of an international movement that is calling on oppressed and exploited workers of all the world to unite for their emancipation... Let those desert us who will, because we refuse to shut the international door in the faces of their own brethren... We will be all the stronger for their going... They are wholly lacking in the revolutionary spirit and have no proper place in the Socialist movement."²⁰

In spite of the work of De Leon and that of Haywood, Debs and other leaders of the Socialist Party left wing, the chauvinist resolutions which De Leon helped to defeat at the International Socialist congresses became the official policy of the Socialist Party apparatus of the United States.

On one occasion an inexcusable white chauvinist remark was made by De Leon in the pamphlet, *Watson on the Gridiron*. He was polemizing against Thomas Watson, editor of *The Jeffersonian*, an open racist and anti-Semite. He said, "Mr. Watson and his 'n-----s' have their hands in each other's wool."²¹

It is not clear what point De Leon was trying to make, nor why he injected the remark—perhaps to indicate Watson's attitude—but it was a blatantly chauvinist statement. To cite, however, only this isolated sentence in describing De Leon's stand on racism, as some labor historians have done, obscures an objective estimate. His record in advocating the rights of Blacks in the IWW, his advocacy of equality in international congresses and his continued fight against restriction of immigration into the United States cannot be ignored.

Many of De Leon's writings against racism have not been resurrected by labor historians. They deserve a rebirth. A case in point was his response, in 1903, to the Socialist Party permitting its Southern members to form segregated locals. De Leon attacked this bitterly: "Why should a truly Socialist organization of whites not take in Negro members, but organize these in separate bodies. Then the body is not truly Socialist. A Socialist body that will trim its sails (to the sacrifice of principle) to 'outside prejudices' had better quit. A truly Socialist body is nothing if not a sort of 'Rough on Prejudices.' To let up on one

'outside prejudice' is to take the plug from under all efforts directed against other prejudices. Ten to one, however, where the issue arises in such a body (as it did in the Socialist Party), it is catering, not to outside, but to inside prejudices, to the prejudices of the members themselves. And then the case is even worse. Such a body should begin by disbanding. It lacks fiber." (From *Daily People*, October 25, 1903.)²²

Not until after the Russian Revolution and the formation of the Communist Party of the United States, in 1919, did American Marxists seriously attempt to clarify their understanding of the double exploitation of Black workers. They waged a fight against the ideology of race supremacy and white chauvinism within their own ranks and organized campaigns aimed against the special economic and civil oppression of Blacks.

But in De Leon's time, the serious problems of the Blacks in the United States were underestimated, misunderstood, and largely ignored.²³

NOTES TO CHAPTER XIII

1. William Z. Foster, *History of the Three Internationals*, New York, International Publishers, 1955, p. 165.
2. Eric Hass, *The SLP and the Internationals*, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1949, p. 48.
3. Daniel De Leon, *Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress*, New York Labor News Co., 1906, Republished in 1929.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-4.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 86.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 189-196.
10. For Lenin's insistence that the Bolsheviks were strong enough to maintain power, in the face of all the difficulties inherent in a country with a large peasantry, remnants of feudalism, disorganization and starvation, see V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, New York, International Publishers, p. 250, "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power," written a few days before the November 7 Revolution. See in the same volume, Lenin's answer to the contention of Kamenev and Zinoviev that the revolution could not succeed because of its weaknesses, pp. 297-339. For the answer to Zinoviev in 1925 that Socialism could be built in the Soviet Union, even without revolutions in other countries, because of the uneven crises of capitalism on a world scale, see *Problems of Leninism*, by Joseph Stalin, International Publishers, 1934, Chapter 6, "The Question of the Victory of Socialism in a Single Country." See also Joseph Stalin, *The October Revolution*, International Publishers, 1934, p. 165.

11. For additional material on De Leon and the Second International, see also *American Disciples of Marx*, by David Herreshoff, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1967, Chapter 5, "Reform and Revolution—De Leon."
12. *Flashlights*, p. 115.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 117, 118.
14. Eric Hass, *The SLP and the Internationals*, p. 80.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 73.
16. Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1952, p. 278.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. Daniel De Leon, *The Ballot and the Class Struggle*, an address on "Woman Suffrage," delivered at Cooper Union, New York, May 8, 1909. New York Labor News Co., 1909, Reprinted many times. Republished in 1947 and later under the title "The Ballot and the Class Struggle," p. 47.
20. *American Socialism 1900-1960*, Edited by H. Wayne Morgan, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, Inc., 1964, pp. 71-80.
21. Daniel De Leon, *Watson on the Gridiron*, Articles in the *Daily People* between October 24, 1909 and June 17, 1910. Published as a pamphlet in 1911. Reissued 1926 and 1935 as *A Decadent Jeffersonian on the Socialist Gridiron*. This is quoted, also in William Z. Foster, *Negro People in American History*, International Publishers, 1954, p. 400. See also: C. Vann Woodward, *Tom Watson, Agrarian Rebel*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1963, pp. 407, 408.
22. Eric Hass, *Capitalism Breeder of Race Prejudice*, New York Labor News Co., 1964, p. 30.
23. Herbert Aptheker, *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the U. S.*, New York, Citadel Press, 1951, pp. 800 ff. Chapters VII and VIII give detailed documentation of the persecution and struggles of Blacks in this period, including strike and labor struggles in the Populist movement and civil rights campaigns. Included is a listing of over 100 known lynchings for the year 1900 alone. Also see David Shannon, *The Socialist Party of America: A History*, New York, Macmillan, 1955, Section on participation in the Internationals. Discusses also Victor Berger's racism. Among the De Leon Archives at the Wisconsin State Historical Society, at Madison, from the library of Herman Schlueter, is the interesting pamphlet *Report of the SLP of the U. S. to the International Socialist Workers Congress*, Zurich, Switzerland, August 6, 1893.

CHAPTER XIV

DE LEON AND THE THEORY OF THE STATE

De Leon's theoretical myopia on the qualitative differences between the capitalist and workers' state lay at the root of his semi-syndicalist ideology. De Leon did not see a *workers' state* as a completely *different* type of state. He did not comprehend the necessity after the takeover of political power by the working class, of a transitional workers' dictatorship, which would represent the majority of the people, using force only against the small minority—the remnants of the capitalist class.

De Leon believed that immediately upon gaining power, through an election, the working class would no longer need a political party nor a state—but only an administrative body, which would be the Industrial Union. He voiced this theory in 1895, when he was forming the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, and continued to preach it until his death.

In the *Daily People*, April 13, 1913, De Leon developed still further his idea of the primary importance of the industrial union over the political party. "Industrialism," he said, "or the industrial union... is the vital aspect of socialism... Aiming at the abolition of class rule, Industrialism bends its efforts to the overthrow of the political state. Aiming at the overthrow of the political state, Industrialism brings together, in the integrally organized industrial forces of the proletariat, both the requisite Might wherewith to make good the Right and also, the new constituencies through the representatives of which to seize the reins of government and administer production... Industrialism lays down the principle that the prime mission of a bona fide political party of Socialism is to promote the economic organization of the proletariat."¹

This was, generally, the same idea he had voiced in his famous Minneapolis speech eight years before, in 1905, entitled in pamphlet form, *The Preamble of the IWW*, which declared that after the socialist revolution, the state would at once disappear.

"Like the slough shed by the serpent, that immediately reappears in its new skin, the Political State will have been shed and society will simultaneously appear in administrative garb."²

In *The Burning Question of Trades Unionism*, a speech he delivered in 1904, De Leon had developed the theme that the state form was inadequate. The political party, operating on the basis of geographical areas only, is tied to the capitalist form. De Leon predicted: "Civilized (that is Socialist) society will know no such ridiculous thing as geographic constituencies. It will know only industrial constituencies. The parliament of (socialist) civilization in America (and elsewhere) will consist not of Congressmen from geographic districts, but of representatives of trades throughout the land."³ The SLP later hailed this statement as the forerunner of the form of the Soviet state system.

C. Desmond Greaves, the English Marxist, in his biography of James Connolly, comments on De Leon's theories on the state: "The ghost of the old anarchist [Bakunin] must have chuckled to see the followers of Marx accepting in his name a compote of Bakuninism and Lassalleism."⁴

Bakunin's principal aim was the destruction of the capitalist "political state" and, like De Leon, the immediate setting up of classless administration. De Leon called this the *Industrial Revolutionary Union*. Bakunin called it "Free Association of Workers."

If De Leon did not understand Marx and Engel's position on the state and largely ignored it, Bakunin had understood it very well, from his own anarchist viewpoint, and had vigorously attacked the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This was the source of lengthy polemics between Marx and Bakunin.

Atindranath Bose, in his *History of Anarchism*,⁵ in sympathetic analysis of Bakunin's position, emphasizes, "Unlike Marx,

Bakunin was for the outright rejection of the State." Bakunin's reaction to the Communist Manifesto was "I hate Communism because it is a negation of liberty... I am not a Communist because Communism concentrates and swallows up in itself, for the benefit of the state, all the forces of society, because it inevitably leads to the concentration of property in the hands of the state, whereas I want the abolition of the state, the final eradication of the principle of authority and patronage proper to the state, which under the pretext of moralizing and civilizing men has hitherto only enslaved, persecuted, exploited and corrupted them."⁶

For Bakunin, said Bosc, "Marx's revolutionary dictatorship is no better than representative democracy, the two being the same in substance."⁷

Pierre Joseph Proudhon, the "father" of anarchism, and Bakunin's mentor, also opposed the dictatorship of the proletariat and Marx's theory of the State. Proudhon, like De Leon said the "economic organization will replace the political... No more laws voted by a majority or even unanimously; each citizen, each town, each industrial union, will make its own laws."⁸

Marx and Engels had thoroughly discussed, over the years, the need for a transitional worker's state. De Leon had translated a number of these statements and printed them, for the first time, in English. However, he, obviously, did not apply these analyses to the American movement.

The works on the dictatorship of the proletariat by Marx and Engels discussed specifically the anti-feudalist bourgeois revolutions of the 1848 period in Europe, the lesson of the Paris Commune of 1871 and the rise of opportunism in the German Party. In their answers to the anti-Marxist anarchists, they always rejected the minimizing of the revolutionary role of the political party of the workers and the workers' government.

They carried on, for years, a running fight against the anarchistic ideas of Proudhon and Bakunin. Marx, in 1873, two years after the Paris Commune, wrote ironically in an Italian Socialist publication: "When the political struggle of the working class assumes a revolutionary form, when the workers set up in place

of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie their revolutionary dictatorship, then they commit the terrible crime of outraging principle; for in order to satisfy their wretched, vulgar, every day needs, in order to break down the resistance of the bourgeoisie, they give the state a revolutionary and transitional form, instead of laying down arms and abolishing the state."⁹ This might also be Marx's comment to De Leon's insistence that the political party of socialism immediately dissolve after the workers' takeover and the economic organization, the industrial union, immediately administer the country, in a stateless, classless society.

Engels also contributed articles in 1873 covering the polemic in the Italian Socialist press. "The anti-authoritarians," he wrote, "demand that the political state should be abolished at one stroke, even before the social relations which gave birth to it have been abolished. They demand that the first act of the Social Revolution shall be the abolition of authority."¹⁰

Marx and Engels' theories on the dictatorship of the proletariat go back to the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848; the necessity of the workers taking political power into their own hands is clearly expounded. "The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all the other proletarian parties: Formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat..."¹¹

Another work, Marx's defense of the Paris Commune, *The Civil War in France*, was published in English by the SLP in 1902. Here, too, De Leon failed to draw the lesson on the need for the workers' dictatorship.¹²

The Paris Commune, set up on March 18, 1871, with the workers in control of Paris, ended May 22nd, with the massacre or imprisonment, by the French bourgeoisie, of scores of thousands of Parisian working class men, women and children. Around the lessons of the two months existence of the workers' control of Paris, Marx and Engels enlarged on their concept of the workers' government. They were more than ever convinced that the workers would meet defeat unless they set up their own state and suppressed the remaining power of the capitalist class. "The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready made State

machinery and wield it for its own purposes," said Marx, in the pamphlet. "They must set up their own workers' state."

The Paris Commune "was essentially a working class government, the product of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form, at last discovered, under which to work out the economic emancipation of labor."¹³

Marx's *The Gotha Program*, written by him in 1875, was also translated by De Leon and printed for the first time in English in the *Daily People* of January 7, 1900. De Leon later printed a commentary on the pamphlet, entitled *Did Marx Err?*, in which he concluded he had not.

The Gotha Program, which was a "Comment on the platform of the German Labor Party," was sharply critical of the opportunist concessions made by the Marxists to the reformist Lassallians. Marx attacked democracy in the abstract and the anarchistic and Lassalleian idea of the "Free State". He made the clearly defined statement "Between the capitalist and Communist society, there lies a period of revolutionary transformation from the former to the latter. A stage of political transition corresponds to this period, and the State during this period can be none other than the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."¹⁴

The SLP, as late as 1922, eight years after De Leon's death, clung to the renunciation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In publishing a new edition of *The Gotha Program*, the claim is made in the preface by the SLP that Marx's reference to the proletarian dictatorship was "accidental" and was "merely 'pulled in' to illuminate a point."¹⁵

The Soviet revolution, November, 1917, established the first stable workers' state. Reformist social-democrats and many anarchists refused to accept it as a socialist government, charging that it was a "dictatorship" and "undemocratic." Karl Kautsky, of the German Social Democracy, led the worldwide onslaught of the right wingers who were proponents of capitalist "democracy." Lenin then issued his remarkable pamphlet *The State and Revolution*, in which he summarized the important writings by Marx and Engels on the state and their debates with the

anarchists and reformists on dictatorship of the proletariat. This pamphlet profoundly affected the socialist movement of the world.¹⁶ Lenin further differentiated between bourgeois and working class democracy in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*.¹⁷

Marx, in a famous letter to Joseph Weydemeyer, described his own additions to social thought, as follows: "(1) That the existence of classes is connected only with certain historical struggles which are characteristic of the development of production (2) That the class war inevitably leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat (3) That this dictatorship is only a transition to the destruction of all classes and to a society without classes."¹⁸

As ammunition against this theory, throughout the years, the anarchists and syndicalists had quoted a supposed newspaper interview with Marx by J. Hamann, an official of the German Metallurgical Union, which Hamann printed in 1869. This dubious quotation, which represented Hamann's twisted recollection of what Marx said, was also repeatedly used by De Leon in justifying as Marxian his "formula," which bypassed the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Marx is supposed to have said, in part, "The trades union should never be connected with, nor made dependent upon a political party, if the former is to fulfill its task... All political parties, whatever their complexion may be, and without exception, warm up the working class only for a season, transitorily. The trades union (i.e. the economic organization) on the contrary, captures the mass of workingmen permanently. Only the trades union (i.e. the economic organization) is capable of setting on foot a true political party of labor and thus raise a bulwark against the power of capital."¹⁹

Marxists, throughout the world, challenged the credibility of this newspaper quotation, which, apparently, supported the anarchist-syndicalist position of denying the leading role of the political party of the workers. De Leon said of this quotation: "The Marxian motto 'only the union can give birth to the true party of labor' became the guiding light of the SLP. The Party lay main stress upon the organization of the working class into

revolutionary unions and considered the ballot, however important, useful and necessary, a secondary consideration."²⁰

To De Leon, here the ballot and political activity were synonymous.

The Russian Marxist, A. Lozovsky, took up this controversy:²¹ "This interview was doubtless 'doctored' by Hamann, for it contains a number of formulations absolutely different from anything Marx ever said or wrote during his whole life, and Marx was not one of those who write one thing and say another."²²

"The extent," Lozovsky continued "to which this falsified quotation was seriously believed, can be seen from the fact that so prominent a man as Daniel De Leon referred to this quotation of Marx, in support of his development of the theory of the primacy of the economic over the political organization..."

Lozovsky then quoted De Leon's conclusions from the Hamann interview, in which he justified his entire formula of the industrial revolutionary union being primarily responsible to carry through the socialist revolution, and that "the economic organization is not 'transitory' but is the present embryo of the future government of the Republic of Labor."²³

"Daniel De Leon claims that all of these theses are the result of the interview that Marx gave to Hamann," said Lozovsky. "... Even if Marx had really said what is ascribed to him by Hamann, it would still have been impossible to draw the conclusions that De Leon drew. Daniel De Leon, this greatest and most revolutionary leader of pre-war American socialism, could not, despite all of his distinguished political, oratorical and literary ability, create a party and head a movement of the masses. Why? Because in the basic problems of party, trade union and class, he had a non-Marxist platform, though he thought that he was a real Marxist..."²⁴

The early editions of *As To Politics*, in which the Hamann interview is printed as a frontispiece (see 2nd edition, 1915), the signature, "Karl Marx" is affixed, without indicating that the quotation is from a newspaper clipping. In the later editions, however, this quotation was eliminated by the SLP (6th printing, 1956).²⁵

The question of the industrial unions acting as the administrator of society, was argued once more in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1920 and 1921.

Several factions developed, headed by Trotsky, B'kharin and members of the "Workers' Opposition." They fought against the leadership of Lenin, taking a position much like De Leon's, that the trade unions should be "coalesced" with the organizations of the Workers' State. They advocated the supremacy of the trade union in the state apparatus.

Lenin said this was a syndicalist deviation. He charged that such a position, carried to its logical conclusion, would destroy the proletarian dictatorship and negate the party's role.

The Workers' Opposition thesis proposed that: "The organization of the management of national economy is the function of the All-Russian Congress of Producers organized in industrial unions which [should] elect central bodies to manage the whole of the national economy of the republic." The opposition would thus have subordinated the party and the state to the trade unions.²⁶

Lenin argued: "It is impossible as a practical matter now to create what Engels spoke about (the Union of Producers). There will be the dictatorship of the proletariat, after that will be a classless society.

"The trade unions are not state organizations," Lenin explained, "not organizations for coercion, they are educational organizations, organizations that enlist and that train; they are schools, schools of administration, schools of management, schools of Communism.

"It is impossible," he went on "to effect the dictatorship of the proletariat through the [trade union] organizations which embrace the whole of the class, because not only in our country, which was one of the most backward capitalist countries, but in all capitalist countries, the proletariat is still so split up, so degraded, so corrupted in some places (namely, by imperialism, in certain countries) that the organizations which embrace the whole class cannot directly effect the proletarian dictatorship. The dictatorship can be effected only by the vanguard [Lenin

refers to the Russian Communist Party as the vanguard] which has absorbed into itself the revolutionary energy of the class . . ." 27

It can be seen from this explanation how uninformed were those who saw an identity between De Leon's Industrial Republic formula and the state form of the Soviet Union.

In his speech, "The Party Crisis," Lenin pointed out that the Opposition was leaving Communism and moving to syndicalism.

Theoretically, De Leon lightly hurdled over the deep-going, many-sided Marxian analysis of the role of the state, and substituted, in its stead, a semi-anarcho-syndicalist, idealist package. His "formula," because of its simplistic concept, "sounded good," to a number of socialists and other militants, ungrounded in Marxian theory, who, like De Leon, wanted to achieve a better, socialist way of life.

Unfortunately, they were influenced by these un-Marxian concepts for many years to come.²⁸

NOTES TO CHAPTER XIV

1. Daniel De Leon, *Industrial Unionism*, New York, NEC, SLP, 1920, p. 71.
2. De Leon, *The Preamble of the IWW*, an address at Minneapolis, July 10, 1905. Many editions have been printed under the title *Socialist Reconstruction of Society*; included in *Socialist Landmarks*, New York Labor News Co., 1952, pp. 217, 218.
3. De Leon, *The Burning Question of Trades Unionism*, included in *Socialist Landmarks*, p. 148.
4. C. Desmond Greaves, *The Life and Times of James Connolly*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1961, p. 175.
5. Atindranath Bose, *History of Anarchism*, Calcutta, World Press, Ltd., 1967, p. 208.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 209. (Direct quotes are from Bakunin's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, here quoted.)
7. Bose, *History of Anarchism*, p. 210.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 130. For more on the position of Bakunin and Proudhon, see George Woodcock, *Anarchism, A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, Cleveland, Meridian Books, The World Publishing Co., 1962, pp. 106-187. Also *Socialist Thought, A Documentary History*, edited by Albert Fried and Ronald Sanders, Doubleday & Co., Garden City, N.Y., 1964, pp. 199-229 and 329-344. Also G. D. H. Cole, *Socialist Thought, Marxism and Anarchism, 1850-1890*, Macmillan, Ltd., 1954. See Robert Hunter, *Violence and the Labor Movement*, Macmillan, 1914.
9. V. I. Lenin, *Ten Classics of Marxism*, "The State and Revolution," New York, International Publishers, 1940, p. 51. Lenin quotes an article by

Marx which appeared in an Italian Socialist publication 1873 and was reprinted in German in 1913 in the *Neue Zeit*.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
11. Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, in *Karl Marx, Selected Works*, Vol. 1, New York, International Publishers, 1933, p. 219.
12. Karl Marx, *Civil War In France, The Paris Commune*, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1902, p. 70. Preface and notes by Lucien Sanial.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 70 and 78.
14. Karl Marx, *The Gotha Program*, New York Labor News Co., 1963, p. 48.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 8.
16. V. I. Lenin, *Ten Classics of Marxism*, "The State and Revolution," pp. 32, 33.
17. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIII, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky," New York, International Publishers, 1945, pp. 347-436.
18. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Correspondence, 1846-1895*, New York, International Publishers, 1942, p. 57.
19. (Quoted on the frontispiece of De Leon's *As To Politics*, by the SLP, 2nd edition, New York, NEC, SLP, 1915.) Here I have used De Leon's translation of Hamann.
20. Arnold Petersen, *Daniel De Leon, Social Architect*, New York Labor News Co., 1941, pp. 91, 92.
21. A. Lozovsky, *Marx and the Trade Unions*, International Publishers, 1931, pp. 152-156.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 153. (Lozovsky used a different translation from De Leon. The words vary slightly but not the meaning.)
23. Daniel De Leon, *Marx as a Text, Industrial Unionism*, Selected Editorials, New York, NEC, SLP, 1920, p. 37 (from *Daily People*, June 29, 1907).
24. Lozovsky, *Marx and the Trade Unions*, p. 156.
25. For elaboration on "our conception of the connection between the productive forces and social relations," see Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, "Letters on Historic Materialism by Marx and Engels," New York, International Publishers, 1933, pp. 372 ff. These letters discuss the dialectical inter-relation of economic with political and social forces.
26. V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. IX, "Party Unity and the Anarcho-Syndicalist Deviation," New York, International Publishers, 1937, p. 124.
27. V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. IX, "The Trade Unions, the Present Situation and the Mistakes of Comrade Trotsky," p. 40. See also "The Party Crisis," and "Once Again The Trade Unions and the Mistakes of Comrades Trotsky and Bukharin." (Much of this volume is devoted to the answer to the syndicalist ideology of the Opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.)
28. For further material on De Leon's position on the State, see the author's articles on De Leonism in *The Communist*, June, August and October 1928 and January-February 1929.

CHAPTER XV

THE "IRON LAW OF WAGES"

De Leon's opposition to "Pure and Simple" trade unions, which brought him into conflict with the mass organizations of his day, had deeper roots than the struggle against opportunist labor leaders. It had its source in a theory of Ferdinand Lassalle, "The Iron Law of Wages," which was at its height in America in the era preceding De Leon's emergence as a leader of the Socialist Labor Party. Lassalle, killed in a duel in 1864, influenced for many years after his death, the international Socialist movement, but particularly the American socialists.

Lassalle summarized the "law" as follows: "The iron economic law which under present day conditions, under the domination of supply and demand, determines the wages of labour is this: that the average wage always remains reduced to the necessary subsistence which is required by the people according to its habits, for the maintenance of existence and reproduction."¹

In view of the existence of this so-called law, Lassalle concluded that it was useless for workers to organize mass unions or any other mass organizations devoted to winning economic demands.

Marx and Engels had argued vigorously against Lassalle's theories, particularly the "Iron Law of Wages" concept. They traced these theories also to Proudhon and Bakunin. De Leon, however, adopted this theory, almost word for word, for his own.

In 1863, Lassalle had organized the General Workmen's Union, which helped effect a revival of working class political activity in Germany. Marx commented, "After fifteen years of

slumber, Lassalle aroused again the labor movement in Germany. This will remain to his undying merit."²

Lassalle, however, made it clear that he believed it was futile for the workers to build *economic* "associations" or unions, since "they cannot bring about a serious improvement in the workers' condition." Here Marx took issue with Lassalle.

In historical perspective, Lassalle's political activities disclose sinister aspects. Through correspondence and through official German records, a long-standing relationship between Lassalle and Otto von Bismarck has been revealed. Lassalle, in pursuance of state subsidies, had not only met with Bismarck many times, but had compromised himself by cooperating with and receiving money from him. The Junker Prime Minister, representing the feudal Prussian monarchists, was maneuvering with the workers, in an attempt to play them against the rising capitalist class.³

Samuel Bernstein, author of the *First International in America* points out that as early as the mid-sixties, and for twenty years thereafter, in the United States, Marxists were combatting the ideology of the futility of unions: "The Lassallean's . . . point was that under capitalism, wages were determined by the cost of bare subsistence; this law ruled out or at least minimized the value of trade unions. For if wages could not be raised above the level of subsistence, workers had little, if any urgency to unite along economic lines."⁴

The Lassallean program had two main points: (1) to obtain universal (male) suffrage; (2) to use the suffrage to vote the workers into power and have their representatives legislate funds for state subsidized cooperatives. Since male suffrage already existed in the United States the American Lassallean program was simply to vote the workers into power and form state run cooperatives.

Frederick Engels noted the anti-trade union Lassallean influence on the SLP. In a letter to Frederick Sorge, on January 16, 1895, after his return from a trip to the United States, he singled out Lucien Sanial for criticism. It was the year in which De Leon was taking his party members out of the AFL, etc. to

form the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. Engels wrote: "So leben bei Euch auch noch die alten Lassalianer fort, und Leute wie Sanial, der heute in Frankreich antiquiert wäre, können dort [in the U.S.] noch eine Rolle spielen."⁵ ("Thus the old Lassalleans still exist among you and men like Sanial, who would be antiquated in France today, can there [in the U.S.] still play a role.")

De Leon ignored the fight by Marx and Engels against Lassalleanism. He preached that under capitalism, struggles for wage increases, strikes, actions for shorter hours and other economic demands, as well as movements for labor legislation, were worse than useless, since, in any case, the workers receive for their labor no more than that which was needed for existence and reproduction. De Leon, in his book, *Socialist Economics in Dialogue*, sets forth that wages must go down, under capitalism, continuing thus until the socialist system takes its place. "The price of labor [wages] declines where labor is a merchandise. Under the capitalist system, labor is not clad with the attributes of humanity; it is simply a merchandise."⁶

Nowhere in this book, a compilation of his "Brother Jonathan" articles on economics, does De Leon discuss the effect of the workers' struggles and organization on wages.

"Our slavery arises from the circumstances of our being merchandise." The only way to stop the decline of wages—"we must overthrow the present tyrant class and the present tyrant system."⁷

According to De Leon, there is no exception to this "law." The worker "will not be humbugged with an 'increase in wages' because he will know that wages are no higher than they will fetch bread and butter, and the wages, even when higher, are in fact lower because they fetch less and less." De Leon's message, in article after article, is clear: Do not struggle for higher living standards. It is a waste of time. Only socialism will stop the decline in wages.⁸

Strikes, wrote De Leon, were successful only in the early stages of capitalism. In later periods, machinery, which increased labor's productivity, also created growing reserve armies of un-

employed. Therefore strikes could not be won. This is a version of the Lassallean, Malthusian "too many people" theory, in connection with the futility of trying to raise living standards.

"The changed conditions brought about changed results," said De Leon. He went on: "Instead of *victory* there was *defeat*, and we have had a long series of them. Either hunger drove the men back to work; or the unemployed took their places; or if the capitalist was in a hurry, he fetched in the help of the strong arm of the government . . ."⁹

Following the failure of the Buffalo Switchmen's strike, De Leon had written in the *People*, August 28, 1892, "Once more it has been shown that no strike could succeed in industries that have reached a high degree of capitalistic concentration."¹⁰

And again, "A trade organization must be clear upon the fact that not until it has overthrown the capitalist system of private ownership in the machinery of production and made this the joint property of the people, thereby compelling everyone to work if he wants to live, is it at all possible for the workers to be safe."¹¹

When De Leon was helping to lay the theoretical groundwork for the IWW, in 1904, he imagined a discussion between a pure and simple trade unionist (that is the AFL member) and an anti-unionist. The intent of the conversation was to prove worthless the mass "pure and simple" union. The dialogue concludes that the union cannot prevent wage declines: "If your union strikes it goes to smash, if it does not strike it melts to smash, so that even as a brake the day is at hand when your unions will exist no more . . . The large displacements of Labor render the union futile."

De Leon admits: "Surely will workingmen, instinctively, periodically gather into unions. The union is the arm that labor instinctively throws up to screen its head . . . Shall we then join unions? The SLP has answered that question by endorsing the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance and by waging unflagging war against the Compers pack." Only unions of socialism are worthwhile.¹²

De Leon amended Lassalle's theories to a degree by allotting

a role to trade unions—but only if they were revolutionary. He opposed the mass union with its “simple” aim of winning economic concessions from the employers.

Engels rejected the Lassallean approach to wages and pointed out that Marx, too, had given attention to the workers’ partial struggles. In a letter to Bebel, he wrote: “Our people have allowed the Lassallean ‘iron law of wages’ to be foisted upon them, and this is based on a quite antiquated point of view, namely that the worker only receives on the average, the *minimum* of the labour wage, because, according to Malthus’ theory of population, there are always too many workers.

“... Now Marx has proved in detail in ‘Capital’ that the laws regulating wages are very complicated, that sometimes one predominates and sometimes another, according to circumstances, that therefore they are in no sense iron but on the contrary, very elastic, and that the thing can by no means be dismissed in a few words, as Lassalle imagines... That Lassallean Malthusian theory has been refuted in detail by Marx in the section (*Capital*, Vol. I) on the Process of Capital Accumulation... By adopting Lassalle’s ‘iron law,’ we commit ourselves to a false statement with a false basis.”

Engels noted that the German Socialists had surrendered to the Lassallean utopianism to the extent of dropping from their program all mention of trade union struggles: “There is not a word about the organization of the working class, as a class, by means of the trade unions. And that is a very essential point, for this is the real class organization of the proletariat, in which it carries on its daily struggles with capital, in which it trains itself.”¹³

De Leon, who first published in English and wrote a preface to the book by Marx, *Value, Price and Profit*, missed its main point. The pamphlet, directed against the theory of the iron law of wages, consisted of the speeches by Marx to two sessions of the General Council of the First International, on June 20 and June 27, 1865. The address, later expanded to form several chapters in the first volume of *Capital*, answered two propositions raised by John Weston, an English member of the Council: (1)

That the social and material prospects of the working class could not in general be improved by wage increases; (2) that efforts of the trade unions to secure wage increases had a harmful effect on other branches of industry.¹⁴

Marx, in this treatise, declared: “The value of the labouring power is formed by two elements—the one merely physical, the other historical or social. Its ultimate limit is determined by the physical element, that is to say, to maintain and reproduce itself, to perpetuate its physical existence, the working class must receive the necessaries absolutely indispensable for living and multiplying. The value of those indispensable necessities form, therefore, the ultimate limit of the value of labour. On the other hand, the length of the working day is also limited by ultimate though very elastic boundaries...”

“Besides this mere physical element, the value of labour is in every country determined by a traditional standard of life... The historical or social element, entering into the value of labour, may be expanded or contracted, or altogether extinguished so that nothing remains but the physical limit... the value of labor itself is not a fixed but a variable magnitude, even supposing the values of all other commodities to remain constant... The fixation of its actual degree is only settled by the continuous struggle between capital and labor...”¹⁵

De Leon fastened upon those paragraphs of Marx’s address which warned that “the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these every-day struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady.” Marx said, therefore, that the workers should not, *exclusively*, be absorbed in these “guerilla fights.”

“Instead of the conservative motto ‘A fair day’s wages for a fair day’s work,’ they ought to inscribe on their banner... ‘Abolition of the wages system.’”

However, Marx spoke also, and in no uncertain language, of the workers’ duty to seek higher living standards. In fact, *Value*

Price and Profit in substance relates the history of the struggle for higher wages and labor legislation. The shorter work day is discussed in a substantial section of the pamphlet.

Marx called England's Ten and a Half Hour Bill, "one of the greatest economic changes we have witnessed. It was a sudden and compulsory rise of wages, not in some local trades, but in the leading industrial branches."¹⁶

Marx emphasized the need for the "legal" struggle. The struggle had to be on both political and economic fronts. He concluded: "The limitation of the working day in England . . . has never been settled except by legislative interference. Without the workingmen's continuous pressure from without, that interference would never have taken place . . . This very necessity of general political action affords the proof that in its merely economic action, capital is the stronger side."¹⁷

De Leon spoke on all occasions *against* fighting for labor legislation. In his speech, "What Means This Strike?" he cited the introduction of an anti-fines bill into the Massachusetts Legislature by a reformist labor leader named Ross. "I argued with him that it does not matter what the law is; the all important thing is, which is the class charged with enforcing it. So long as the capitalist class held the government, all such labor laws as he was straining for were a snare and a delusion."

Proudhon, in his book *The Philosophy of Poverty*, had also "revised" Marx on the question of wages and the working day. "Wages," he said, "are the proportion of the elements composing wealth and consumed reproductively every day by the mass of workers." He concluded: "It is impossible, I declare, for strikes, followed by an increase in wages, not to culminate in a general rise in prices."¹⁸ Marx wrote *The Poverty of Philosophy* in refutation of his arguments, which were substantially the same as Lassalle's "iron law." He once more emphasized the necessity for the working class to combine into unions to struggle for a higher standard of living.

In summarizing the far-reaching effects of *Value, Price and Profit*, William Z. Foster said that Marx had laid the theoretical basis for the trade union movement. "Marx showed that trade

union action was capable of raising labor above the subsistence level, just as concerted or monopolistic action on the employers' part could depress wages below that level."¹⁹

De Leon, however, had adopted for his own, a theory on trade unionism similar to that held by Lassalle, Proudhon and Bakunin, which Marx had already exploded. He embraced the principle of the "iron law of wages," rejected demands for the immediate needs of the workers and, further, in his attacks on "simple" trade unions, he did not discern the difference between corrupt leadership of the mass unions and mass union membership.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XV

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13. Marx and Engels, *Correspondence, 1846-1895*, Letter 161 (Engels to Bebel, March 18, 1875), p. 335.
14. Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, "Value, Price and Profit," New York, International Publishers, 1933, pp. 282-338.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 332, 333.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 291.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 334. (Marx enlarged on the question of factory laws in *Capital*, Vol. I.)
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CHAPTER XVI

JAMES CONNOLLY VERSUS DE LEON

James Connolly, Irish Socialist leader, and editor of the *Irish Workers Republic*, became involved in controversy with De Leon on several issues, but particularly the question of wages and the possibility of achieving wage increases. He came to the United States in 1902 at De Leon's invitation and completed a successful tour. In 1903, he returned to the United States and remained for seven years. Connolly, later, in 1916, led the Easter Rebellion in Ireland, against the imperialist war and British suppression of the Irish people. In this bitter Easter Week "uprising," he was seriously wounded by British troops and carried to his "execution" on a stretcher, where he was killed. The people of Ireland have named streets and buildings for this Irish Socialist.

Largely under the influence of De Leon's writings, Connolly had become a militant socialist. His struggles against the reformists in England, Ireland and Scotland were inspired, in no small part, by De Leon's fight against opportunism. Raised in the trade-union movement of Ireland, when he came to the United States, he attempted to direct the SLP toward mass movements and immediate struggles.

Connolly had fought the opportunists and racists in the International Socialist Congress in Paris, in 1900, together with De Leon and other left wingers. These discussions had laid the basis for Connolly's first trip to the United States.

C. Desmond Greaves, James Connolly's biographer, saw his socialist development in three theoretical stages: (1) his early Social Democratic period; (2) a syndicalist phase, influenced by De Leon, and (3) a deepening identification with more scientific social-

ism. "Connolly typified all that was best within the revolutionary wing of the International," Creaves wrote. "He displayed its splendid reckless militancy. He shared its frequent theoretical confusion. What marked him out as one of its greatest was his instant recognition of revolutionary *practice*. 'Less theorizing,' he may have said, but he added: 'more fighting.' It was this intense practicality of Connolly which . . . led him into conflict with De Leon on wages."¹

On his return to Europe, after his first visit, Connolly formed branches of the Socialist Labor Party in Scotland and Ireland. In the United States again, in 1903, he was elected by the SLP membership to the SLP National Executive Committee. On this visit, however, he was coolly received by De Leon. Political differences developed between them, the first being around the "iron law" of wages.

Connolly was not offered full time work by De Leon nor the SLP, and constantly was faced with desperate poverty. Personal tragedy also came to him. His wife and children were to follow him to America. When he went to meet them at the incoming ocean liner, he learned that a daughter had accidentally been burned to death just before the family's departure.

Connolly found it difficult to obtain work and went to live temporarily with cousins in Troy, New York. That year (1903) he addressed a Socialist Labor Party meeting in Schenectady, where he became aware of the existing theoretical differences between himself and the SLP. He was astonished when his remarks on the current trade union struggles met a blast of opposition. The practical socialist working class leader was faced by a highly vocal audience opposing his position that to engage in the trade union movement for higher wages was a Marxian responsibility. Reflecting the position of De Leon, in discussion a number of speakers reviled agitation for wage increases and work in the mass unions. Such increases, once obtained, they said, would be cancelled by price rises. Connolly's stand was unacceptable to the meeting.²

He differed with De Leon not only on wages but on the question of marriage and the approach to religion. He felt that in

these areas, De Leon was isolating the SLP from the American people. He attempted to present his point of view in the columns of the SLP paper.

Creaves points out that these differences were not merely superficial ones of personality, nor attributable to De Leon's dictatorial tendencies. The differences were basic and grew out of Connolly's rejection of the sectarianism which was prevalent in the American movement.

"Connolly raised questions fundamental to the tactics of American Socialism," says Greaves. "He challenged its traditional sectishness and separation from reality. He revealed inconsistencies in De Leon's teachings which could put in question the basis of his policy."³ Greaves characterizes De Leon's trade union position as "neo-Lassalleian."

In 1904, Connolly wrote a letter to the *People*: "One of our [SLP] organizers in the West, in the course of a discussion with a spokesman of the Kangaroos* held that the workers could not even temporarily gain benefit from a rise in wages as 'every rise in wages was offset by a rise in prices.' When the Kangaroo quoted from Marx's *Value, Price and Profit* to prove the contrary, our SLP man airily disposed of Marx by saying that Marx wrote in advance of and without anticipation of the present day combinations of capital . . . the theory that a rise in prices always destroys the value of a rise in wages sounds very revolutionary, but it is not true—it was one of the points in dispute between my opponents at the Schenectady meeting and myself."⁴

Later in 1904, Connolly again wrote the *Daily People*, taking issue with the constant pounding by De Leon and the paper on the Catholic church. The differences here were in approach and emphasis. Coming from a Catholic country, with his eye on organizing the Irish and Italian workers in America, Connolly was sensitive to their religious feelings.

De Leon, who repeatedly continued to beat back the numerous attacks of the Catholic hierarchy on Socialism, did not take

* Splitters from the SLP because of differences on the trade union question, many of whom, eventually, joined the Socialist Party of America.

sufficiently into account the difference between workers who were religious and the Church leadership.

He had cause to defend Socialism against the many attacks of these leaders. The persecution of Father McGlynn, a Catholic priest who took part in the Henry George campaign of 1886, had a deep effect on De Leon. He referred many times to the fact that the Archbishop of New York had warned the priest to leave the movement and when he refused, Father McGlynn was excommunicated.

To De Leon, the Catholic Church was purely and simply a capitalist political organization, "with all that implies." He added "Like all other political bodies, it seeks material and political power to enforce its views..."

Again, he wrote: "It is not a religion at all, but just what Socialism has all along argued, to wit, a business, or a political concern ambushed behind religion."⁵

De Leon revived the medieval term, "Ultramontaniam" to characterize the reactionary hierarchy which, he said, was attempting to influence the political and economic life of the country. Every major criticism levelled against Socialism by the hierarchy was answered in great detail by De Leon. "It is true that in this crusade against Socialism, the Roman Catholic church leads. It is most active. Whether it be at the funeral of a New York archbishop, or the laying of the cornerstone of a new Buffalo cathedral, or the graduation exercises of a Catholic school... tirades of various lengths and various degrees of bitterness against Socialism are never missing..."⁶

De Leon scrutinized attempts by Church authorities to influence the unions against socialism, citing the formation in Schenectady of the "Militia of Christ," which organized union members for "the avowed purpose... to fight Socialism."⁷ The American Federation of Catholic Societies, at the Seattle convention of the AFL, worked toward the same end.⁸

Even De Leon's own articles gave evidence that among rank and file Catholics, especially workers, there were at that time cleavages from the hierarchy's conservative position. Members of the church in Biddeford and Lewiston, Maine, were inter-

dicted by the Bishop, with resultant split-offs occurring in the church.⁹ In Neff, Ohio, sixty-five workers were disciplined by the Church; they split to form one of their own.

De Leon almost never recognized religion as a private matter. But in *Abolition of Poverty (Father Cassionia)*, he wrote: "Seeing religion is a private affair and that the Socialist demands from others, for his private preferences, the same respect that he accords to their private preferences in the matter; the subject needed and needs no further treatment."¹⁰ This, however, was a rare reference in this area. There were, for all practical purposes, no overtures by the SLP to religious workers on the basis of privacy of religious beliefs. Coupled with the constantly sharp, repeated attacks on the church hierarchy, this tended to repel Catholic workers. Connolly was dismayed at the lack of a "united front" approach.

He had settled in Newark, New Jersey, and was working as a machinist in the Singer Sewing Machine Company. After hours, he was building a broad unity movement which included Italian and Irish Catholics. With his practical instinct for mass work, and his background of work in Ireland—almost entirely with Catholic workers—he sought dialogue with the clergy as well as the workers. His position on religion, as stated in SLP controversies with De Leon, is succinctly expounded in an article, first printed in 1901, and entitled *Socialism and Religion*, "The Known and the Unknowable," and printed later as a pamphlet, the *New Evangel*.

This contained the same emphasis and approach Connolly had attempted to inject into SLP policy. Speaking for the Irish Socialist Party, Connolly stated that atheism and Socialism did not automatically coincide. The most outstanding atheists of the day were enemies of Socialism. "The late Col. Bob Ingersoll, the chief apostle of Freethought doctrine in the United States, was well known as an apologist of capitalism... Obviously, even the meanest intelligence can see that there need be no identity of thought between the Freethinker as such, and the Socialist as a Socialist." Socialists were not, inevitably, atheists. Religion was personal and private.

What is the method of attack of capitalism? To try to create a prejudice against socialism, to divert the workers from socialism, to create a "misconception of the attitude of the Socialist Party towards the theological dogma in general... The Socialist Party of Ireland prohibits the discussion of theological or anti-theological questions *at its meetings*, public or private.

"... Religion is a private matter and outside the scope of Socialist *action*. Socialists have a social materialist approach.

"... As a political party, they [the Socialists] wisely prefer to take their stand upon the actual phenomena of social life... Religion of every kind is admittedly based upon 'faith'..."

Connolly always kept in the forefront, activities involving the need for unity in the working class. "To identify Socialism with anti-religion, would be to abandon at once that universal non-sectarian character which today we find indispensable to *working class unity*." Socialism "is neither Free Thinker nor Christian, Turk nor Jew, Buddhist nor Idolator, Mohammedan nor Parsee—it is only HUMAN."¹¹ *

On marriage, Connolly had written to the *People*: "When touring this country (U.S.) in 1902, I met in Indianapolis an esteemed comrade, who almost lost his temper with me because I expressed my belief in monogamous marriage and because I said I still hold that the tendency of civilization is toward its perfection and completion, instead of its destruction."¹²

Connolly found it increasingly difficult to even get a hearing of his views in the SLP. In the *Daily People* of March 11, 1907, there appeared two full columns of printed matter, opposite the editorial page. Headed *As To Connolly's Report*, it consisted of (1) a brief plea by Connolly that he be permitted to present in the newspaper his position (which was supported by a number of members of the National Executive Committee) and (2) a lengthy reply by the Editor (De Leon) making use of exhaustive procedural technicalities, which in effect reiterated the right of the editor to print what he considered proper. De Leon avoided any

* For a Marxist exposition of Religion, see Herbert Aptheker, *The Urgency of Marxist-Christian Dialogue*, New York, Harper & Row, 1970.

political discussion in this article, and Connolly was refused space in the *People* to present his views.¹³ At this time Connolly still fully accepted the Industrial Union state formula and De Leon's semi-syndicalist ideas on the state. The attitude of De Leon and the SLP on Connolly's theoretical differences, however, forced him to make the decision to resign from the SLP.

Toward the end of his American stay, after he had become an organizer for the IWW, Connolly joined the Socialist Party. He continued to work with members of the SLP, as well as with left wing SPA workers.¹⁴

In America, Connolly had proved his organizational ability and leadership qualities. The unity movement in Newark, referred to earlier in the chapter on the IWW, was the largest such movement of its time. It attempted to unite members of the SLP and left SPA workers. He organized an Irish Federation which included Irish socialists from both the SLP and SPA, and non-socialists. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, her sister Kathy, her father and Pat Quinlan and other Irish Socialists worked with him. De Leon objected, too, to the organization of such "federations." Connolly sold the *Harp*, the Irish American Socialist paper, of which he was editor, on street corners.

One must seriously consider the treatment accorded James Connolly, in a complete evaluation of Daniel De Leon. Here was not an opportunist nor reformist. Connolly was the leading Irish Socialist, the man who throughout his life sought to combine the nationalist struggle for Irish freedom with the struggle for socialism.¹⁵

It is not to the credit of the SLP that in the 1934 edition of *Daniel De Leon. The Man and His Work*, once more was reprinted the vituperative, personal slanders against Connolly, calling him a "self seeker."¹⁶ De Leonites, such as Rudolph Katz, characterized Connolly, as a follower of the Pope, a careerist who wanted De Leon's job, and a "conspirator" against De Leon. This was said about a talented writer, speaker, poet, playwright and mass organizer, who, all his life, as had De Leon, turned his back on monetary gain.

In 1907, when the sub-committee of the National Executive

Committee, including the New Jersey and New York organizations, supported Connolly, De Leon is quoted by Olive Johnson as saying, "I never saw such a lot of wild goats led by such a wild ass."¹⁷

Too little attention has been given to the life and writings of Connolly by American scholars. His work in the American socialist movement during the seven years of his stay was a valuable contribution to the mass movements and a refutation of sectarianism.¹⁸

NOTES TO CHAPTER XVI

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2. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
5. Daniel De Leon, *The Vatican in Politics*, a compilation of editorials from 1891 to 1913, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1928, pp. 30, 51, 68.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 48. From an editorial in the *Daily People*, June 20, 1912.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 31. (*The People*, January 14, 1911.)
8. *Ibid.*, p. 69. (*Daily People*, January 5, 1914.)
9. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
10. Daniel De Leon, *Abolition of Poverty*, New York Labor News Co., 1962, p. 59.
11. James Connolly, *The New Evangel*. Reprinted in *Erin's Hope and The New Evangel*, Dublin and Belfast, New Books Publications, 1968 (First publication 1901), pp. 33 ff.
12. *The Life and Times of James Connolly*, pp. 140, 141. See also following chapter on the woman question.
13. Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin, De Leon Archives. *Daily People*, March 11, 1907.
14. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *I Speak My Own Piece*, New York, Masses and Mainstream, Inc., 1955, pp. 65, 66.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Rudolph Katz, Symposium. *Life and Times of De Leon*, "With De Leon Since '89," Book 2, New York, NEC, SLP, 1919, 1926, 1934, p. 126.
17. Olive Johnson and Henry Kuhn, *The Socialist Labor Party During Four Decades, 1890-1930*, New York Labor News Co., 1931, p. 76.
18. For more on the relations of De Leon and Connolly, see the British monthly *Marxism Today*, June 1968. This is a special issue honoring Connolly.
It would also be rewarding to read James Connolly's important *Labour in Irish History*, first published in 1910. New Books Publications, Dublin, 1967.

CHAPTER XVII

WOMEN, THE FAMILY, AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

Woman's suffrage was won, nationally, in 1920, six years after Daniel De Leon's death. Throughout most of his life in the socialist movement, millions of women, and men, both working and middle-class, waged an active, militant and effective effort for this elementary democratic right. Hundreds of meetings, demonstrations, marches and allied actions demanded "Votes for Women." Victory was won in a number of states before the national constitutional amendment was passed.

De Leon exhibited his straight-laced doctrinairism and remained aloof from this important movement. He offered only irony and sharp criticism and reiterated the formula that only socialism could provide the answer to this desperate struggle for the vote and women's emancipation.

At Boston, as early as 1896, De Leon had expounded on the futility of attempting to expand existing democratic rights. "We Socialists," he said, "do not propose to change forms. We care nothing for forms. We want a change of the inside of the mechanism of society. We see in England a crowned monarch; we see in Germany a sceptered emperor; we see in this country an uncrowned president, and we fail to see any essential difference between Germany, England or America."¹

Seven years later, De Leon repeated his opposition to the struggle for democratic rights, in his address, "The Warning of the Gracchi":

"... It matters not how the voting is done; it matters not whether we have the Australian ballot or the Maltese ballot; it matters not whether we have the secret ballot or the viva voce ballot;

aye, if it comes to it, it should not matter whether we have the ballot at all. All such 'improvements'—like the modern 'ballot reforms' and schemes for 'referendums,' 'initiative,' 'election of federal Senators by popular vote' and what not—are, in the very nature of things, so many lures to allow the revolutionary heat to radiate into vacancy."²

Again, seven years later, on May 8, 1909, when the woman's suffrage movement was at its height, De Leon, more than ever set in his doctrinaire position, made a well prepared speech at Cooper Union Hall in New York City. This polemic was entirely devoted to an attack on the woman's suffrage movement.

What brought about the suppression of women? Tools were invented, "the ponderous ones that required muscular strength to wield." Therefore man secured the supremacy, because only he was strong enough to handle the heavy tools. He, not woman, dominated the new period.

"Those physically powerful enough to wield the then most useful tool became an aristocracy; those who could not, fell below. The line of cleavage was accordingly not sex but physique. Of course, sex qualities contributed to mark the female sex weaker. Nevertheless it was not as Woman that she was subordinated."³ This was a false argument. Of course, since women were subordinated, the reality was they were enslaved as a sex.

De Leon took issue with this position. "... It suits the Ruling Class to have Woman's Suffrage presented as a sex issue. As such an issue, the source and present foundation of Woman's social inferiority [the class issue] is kept dark, and thereby the inferiority is perpetuated."⁴ The double exploitation of women who worked, as a sex, and as worker, escaped him completely.

De Leon attacked the pronouncements of middle class suffrage leaders at a high level of vindictiveness. The plea of Olive Schreiner, who asked for "justice" for her sex, was ironically characterized by him as "pathetic." Mrs. Philip Snowden, Carrie Chapman Catt, President of the International Suffrage Alliance, Rabbi Stephen Wise and others were ridiculed.⁵ One would "imagine that male creation was a sort of 'appendix.'"

He concluded: "There is nothing easier, nor yet more useless

to the movement to perceive differences between Woman and Man... for the same reason that there is nothing easier, nor yet more useless to the Movement than to discover the difference there is between a Negro and a white man, a carpenter and a teacher, etc. More difficult, withal useful to the Movement, is the discovery of that which may be identical in all—their proletarian character. This is a creative discovery."⁶

De Leon ignored the fact that the movement for woman's suffrage, which included feminists with middle-class philosophies, also included many working women, union leaders, and Socialists, such as Ella Reeve Bloor, Anita Whitney and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.

Strikingly parallel to the position of De Leon was that of the right wing leaders of the Socialist Party. Women within the SPA learned that the woman question was part of the labor question. Capitalism was forcing women out of the home into jobs. Socialist leaders stated that ninety-nine out of every hundred women would return to their homes when they no longer needed to augment their husband's income.

Within the Socialist Party, as well as on the outside, women were assigned to a minor role. By 1908, according to Ira Kipnis: "What four years before had been described as woman's lack of organizational talent and unfortunate satisfaction with her inferior status had been developed into the 'scientific discovery' that women were nearer to the 'child' and 'savage' than man. It is not surprising, therefore, that some party members refused to sign petitions favoring suffrage extension to these 'lower creatures' and argued that Socialist principles did not entail equal rights for women."⁷

Women Socialists, in a small minority within the Socialist Party (2,000 out of 50,000 dues paying Socialists) reacted to this treatment. They formed their own organizations in many cities, including New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, Philadelphia and California, among others.

Mother Ella Reeve Bloor, who enjoyed a long career, later, as a labor and Communist organizer, was forced to conduct many struggles against male chauvinism—for equal rights within as

well as outside the socialist movement. Kipnis describes one early struggle, when she was in her late 40's:

"At the 1910 national [Socialist] Party Congress, the delegates spent almost an entire day debating the proposal of Ella Reeve Bloor of Connecticut that Socialist women devote some time to work in the general suffrage movement. Opponents of the proposal argued that it emphasized 'sex consciousness' instead of 'class consciousness.' Women Socialists were instructed to work for their enfranchisement only through their own party."⁸ Nevertheless Ella Reeve Bloor and other indignant, militant women Socialists joined with non-Socialist fighters for woman's suffrage and gave their time and talents, unstintingly, to that movement.

The work of these Socialist women had a substantial educational effect on the mass movement. With the slogan, "Votes for Women," they carried on the campaign against child labor, for protection of working women in industry, for abolition of legal discrimination against women, for equal pay for equal work, etc.—demands which De Leon considered useless and hopeless under capitalism. On the other hand, the minutes of the First International abound with demands for the protection of women workers.

Marx and Engels had provided different guide-lines from the De Leon theories here. They had been deeply interested in the Trade Unions Suffrage Agitation Association in England, and assiduously worked for the extension of "manhood suffrage," which culminated in the British Reform Laws of 1867. Marx's activity in the struggle for universal (male) suffrage provided a classic example of how to conduct mass work, while maintaining an independent, critical position. The socialist point of view, in this large mass movement in England, was elucidated and clarified, at the same time that unity was established with other suffrage forces, including the industrial bourgeoisie.

Marx wrote Dr. Ludwig Kugelmann in 1866, "The Reform movement here (for universal suffrage) which our Central Council called into existence (and in which I played a great part) has now reached immense and irresistible dimensions."⁹

He wrote Engels, July 7, 1866, "The workers' demonstrations in London which are marvelous compared with anything we have

seen in England since 1849, are purely the work of the International."¹⁰

He wrote to Kugelmann, December 12, 1868, on women. He felt the level of women's rights was a measure of the extent of social progress, and applauded the record of American labor in this regard.

"Great progress," he wrote, "was evident in the last Congress of the American 'Labor Union' in that among other things, it treated working women with complete equality . . . Anybody who knows anything of history knows that great social changes are impossible, without the feminine ferment. Social progress can be measured exactly by the social position of the fair sex . . ." Marx added, with humor, which today's women might find less than uproarious, "the ugly ones included."¹¹ However, his basic appraisal of the need for the struggle for women's rights as a necessity for the working class was apparent.

De Leon's equivocal position on monogamy caused a ferment within the SLP. He had indirectly opened the floodgates to advocacy of promiscuity when he translated and printed, serially, uncritically, August Bebel's *Woman Under Socialism* in the *Weekly People*. The book might have been entitled more correctly *Woman Under Capitalism*, since its major portion consisted of a brilliant analysis of the enslavement of women as a sex and the history of their double exploitation under capitalism. Only a very small section of the book dealt with sex relations under Socialism.

De Leon's Preface to the book appeared in the *Weekly People*, March 30, 1903, and the translation was printed weekly thereafter. The issue of December 5, 1903, contained "Woman in the Future."¹²

Bebel considered promiscuity as one of the legitimate patterns of behavior under Socialism and made a plea for the equal rights of men and women to this type of sexual relationship under Socialism.

"The woman of future society," said Bebel, "is socially and economically independent; she is no longer subject to even a vestige of dominion and exploitation . . .

"In the choice of love, she is, like man, free and unhampered. She woos or is wooed, and closes the bond from no considerations other than her own inclinations . . . The satisfaction of the sexual instinct is as much a private concern as the satisfaction of any other natural instinct."

Bebel looked favorably upon Mathilde Reichardt Stromberg, who spoke of "great souls" such as Goethe. "'Do we not all read without the slightest moral indignation' she said 'how Goethe to begin with the greatest as an illustration—again and again [spent] the warmth of his heart and the enthusiasm of his great soul on a different woman?'" She claimed the same right of promiscuity for the "great souls" among women, George Sand, for instance.

Bebel added: "But why should that be the privilege of the 'great souls' only and not of the others also, who are no 'great souls' and can be none? No such difference exists to us."

The discussion and debates within the SLP centered around whether promiscuity was compatible with Marxism. The position of some SLP members was as follows: Monogamy under Capitalism is hypocritical and wrong; therefore all Monogamy is wrong, even under Socialism; under Socialism (as well as in the present society) sexual freedom, without restraint, should obtain.

De Leon said that Marxists could have honest differences in this field; socialists could not predict the future.¹³ He wrote in his Preface: "There can be no emancipation of humanity without the social independence and equality of the sexes."

"Up to this point all socialists are likely to agree with the presentation made of fundamental principles . . . The moment the field of the known is abandoned, and one launches out into pictures of future forms, a wide field is opened for speculation. Differences of opinion start over that which is probable or not probable."

He thus "legitimized" the advocacy of promiscuity.

De Leon, in fact, did not present his position on sexual relations and the family until the translations were printed in book

form, in 1904. Here he attacked promiscuity and forecast the development of the monogamous family under Socialism.

"The moral, as well as the material accretions of the race's intellect, since it uncoiled out of early Communism, bar to my mind, all prospect—I would say danger, moral and hygienic, of promiscuity, or of anything even remotely approaching that . . . Opinion among these forces [the Socialists] while it cannot be said to clash, takes on a variety of shades—as needs will happen among men; who, at one on basic principles, on the material superstructure . . . cannot but yield to the allurements of speculative thought on matters as yet hidden in the future . . . For one, I hold there is as little ground for rejecting monogamy, by reason of the taint that clings to its inception, as there would be ground for rejecting cooperation by reason of the like taint that accompanies its rise.

"For one, I hold that the monogamous family, bruised and wounded in the cruel rough and tumble of modern society . . . will bloom under Socialism into a lever of mighty power for the moral and physical elevation of the race." He again did not attempt to polemicize against "free love" advocates within the SLP and repeated acceptance of their ideas as Marxist, as well as his own.

Olive Johnson, in *Woman and the Socialist Movement*, her major work, spoke with less qualification. She wrote: "It is among the proletarians that the purest of all human feeling, modern sex-love, with a view to marriage and life partnership, has sprung into life."

"A new morality, a union based on mutual love and faith is growing in spite of all influences to the contrary. Out of this will spring the morals of the future, a monogamian family in the full sense of the word."¹⁴

In *Watson on the Gridiron*, De Leon again considers the question of marriage under socialism. "Socialism," he wrote in 1909, "plants itself exclusively upon the economic question . . . What concern is it of Socialists what the private opinion may be of this or that Socialist as to whether monogamy will or will not continue?"¹⁵

Marxists, obviously, cannot claim to predict the future in its detail. The scientific approach to social questions, however, contrary to De Leon, can project historic development in broad outline. Marx, Engels, and later Lenin, had the latter approach.

The philosophy of Marxism is, in fact, concerned with the uplifting and improving of the workers' life in all aspects and in all fields.

Did Marx and Engels condemn monogamy as such? Did they open the door to "free love," by being tolerant to such ideas—or to promiscuity or polygamy? The writings of Marx and Engels, never directed against monogamy in itself, exposed hypocritical so-called monogamy existing under capitalism, which is not monogamy at all. Monogamy and the double sex standard, they stated, were used to enslave women, to create prostitution and force women into an inferior position.

Engels, in *Origin of the Family*, treated capitalist monogamy historically. He showed that family relationships changed with the changing methods of production, in developing society.¹⁶ The development of tools, with control in the hands of the males, brought about the overthrow of matriarchal society. Engels emphasized: "The overthrow of mother-right was *the world historical defeat of the female sex*. The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude; she became the slave of his lust, and a mere instrument for the production of children. This degraded position of the woman... has gradually been palliated and glossed over and sometimes clothed in a milder form, but in no sense has it been abolished..."

What about the relationship of the sexes in the future, under Socialism? Engels writes that only the abolition of capitalism can bring "Full freedom of marriage. For there is no other motive left except mutual inclination. And as sexual love is by its very nature exclusive—although at present this exclusiveness is fully recognized only in the woman—the marriage based on sexual love is by its nature individual marriage."¹⁷

Engels continued: "If now the economic considerations also disappear which made women put up with the habitual infidelity of their husbands—concern for their own means of existence

and still more for their children's future—then, according to all previous experience, the equality of woman thereby achieved, will tend infinitely more to make men really monogamous than to make women polyandrous.

"But what will quite certainly disappear from monogamy are all the features stamped upon it through its origin in property relationships; these are, in the first place, supremacy of the man, and secondly, indissolubility."¹⁸

It was not sufficient to condemn monogamy in general, Engels said. Modern monogamy is class monogamy, based on subjection of women. It was not sufficient merely to condemn capitalist monogamy. It was necessary to present working class morality and working class morals regarding relations of the sexes. In this way the line could be drawn between ideologies of bourgeois promiscuity and working class monogamy.¹⁹

Lenin and his party, the Bolsheviks, later the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, after assuming state power in November, 1917, brought many of these predictions of sex equality into life. Clara Zetkin, German woman Communist, reported her conversations with Lenin on the subject in her pamphlet, *Lenin on the Woman Question*, written in 1920. Lenin said, "Dissoluteness in sexual life is bourgeois, is a phenomenon of decay."²⁰ To Inessa Armand, he wrote, in 1915 "Demand for free love? This is not proletarian but a bourgeois demand."²¹

The written works of Lenin and the policies of existing socialist governments, of course, reflect richer experiences on the woman question than were available to De Leon. These problems can by no means be considered solved even in socialist countries. However, guidelines have been established and women have achieved, under Socialism, more creative, useful and fulfilling lives.

Lenin, writing on demands of women workers, might have been answering De Leon directly on his Woman Suffrage speech. Lenin summarizes the teachings of Marx and Engels on this question and, further, gives depth and dimension to the struggle for women's rights. On the one hand, he agreed with the argument of De Leon as to the class and property basis of

suppression of women: "The inseparable connection between the social and human position of the woman and private property in the means of production must be strongly brought out. That will draw a clear and ineradicable line of distinction between our policy and feminism... The Communist women's movement must itself be a mass movement, a part of the general mass movement... there can be no real mass movement without women..." Lenin also urged the development of mass struggles for women's rights, as De Leon did not.

"It is right for us to put forward demands favorable to women," Lenin continued: "This is not a minimum, a reform program, in the sense of the Social Democrats of the Second International... We demonstrate thereby that we recognize these needs, and are aware of the humiliation of the woman, the privileges of the man... the women of the working class will not feel irresistibly driven into sharing our struggles for the state power if we only and always put forward that one demand, though it were with the trumpets of Jericho. No. No. The women must be made conscious of the political connection between our demands and their own suffering needs and wishes. They must realize what the proletarian dictatorship means for them; complete equality with man in law and practice, in the family, in the state, in society; an end to the power of the bourgeoisie." ²²

NOTES TO CHAPTER XVII

1. *Socialist Landmarks. Four Addresses by De Leon*, "Reform or Revolution," New York, New York Labor News Co., 1952, pp. 33, 34.
2. Daniel De Leon, *Two Pages from Roman History*, "The Warning of the Gracchi," New York Labor News Co., 1903 (reprinted many times), pp. 85, 86.
3. Daniel De Leon, *Woman Suffrage* (later renamed *The Ballot and the Class Struggle*), New York Labor News Co., 1st printing, 1909; 7th printing, 1947, p. 6.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-30.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
7. Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1952, pp. 260-262.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
9. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Correspondence, 1846-1895*, New York, International Publishers, 1934, Letter 91, pp. 214, 215. See also Letter 197, pp. 441, 442.

10. *Ibid.*, Letter 88, p. 209. See also Letter 74, p. 180. (In the latter letter, Marx described to Engels how the socialists safeguarded their independent position within the united front they helped to build: "On my motion (in the First International Council) it was decided: (1) To send the deputation merely as 'observers' [to a meeting with the industrial bourgeoisie for manhood suffrage]; (2) So far as the meeting is concerned to act with them if in the first place manhood suffrage is directly and openly proclaimed in the programme and in the second, if people, *elected by us*, are brought onto the *regular* committee, so that they can watch these fellows and when the *first treachery* which as I made clear to them all, is *certainly planned*, takes place, can compromise them.")
11. *Ibid.*, Letter 117, p. 255.
12. Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin. *De Leon Archives, Weekly People*, issues March 30, 1903 to December 5, 1903.
13. *Ibid.*, *Weekly People*, March 30, 1903.
14. Olive Johnson, *Woman and the Socialist Movement*, 1908. From the *De Leon Archives*, Wisconsin State Historical Society. This important pamphlet has been overlooked by the current SLP.
15. Daniel De Leon, *Watson on the Gridiron*, New York Labor News Co., 1926 (a compilation of 1909 articles in the *Daily People*).
16. Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, New York, International Publishers, 1964, pp. 25-75.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 73. Also see *The Woman Question*, Selections from the writings of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, V. I. Lenin, and Joseph Stalin, International Publishers, 1951, pp. 74, 75, 76.
19. *Origin of the Family*, *Ibid.*
20. *The Woman Question*, p. 80.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-91.

CHAPTER XVIII

LENIN AND DANIEL DE LEON

De Leon had died, in May, 1914, only months before the outbreak of World War I. After the 1917 Bolshevik assumption of state power in Russia, SLP leaders proclaimed that Lenin, the leader of the revolution, was theoretically indebted to De Leon and, without reservation, applauded his work and the policies of the SLP.

Many SLP members gave the new Soviet government their support, feeling it was identical to the Industrial Republic or the Industrial Union Administration, for which they and De Leon had been striving so many years. The SLP rank and file felt a kinship with Lenin because he and the Soviet government opposed the imperialist war. He was known to them because he had assumed leadership in the world fight against the Second International opportunists, at a time when a number of outstanding socialists had capitulated to the capitalist class in their own countries in their war moves. A strong surge within the SLP for unity with the left-wing of the Socialist Party was motivated by the desire to support anti-war and pro-Soviet Socialists the world over.

Although Lenin, according to the SLP, founded his country on De Leon's Industrial Union Republic formula, Stalin, Khrushchev, and other Soviet leaders, they charge, departed from Marxism. For many years, the SLP has bitterly opposed the Soviet Union, except for one short period.

To establish their ideological comradeship with Lenin, the SLP printed dispatches and statements of American journalists and other travellers in the Soviet Union in 1917 and 1918.

Lenin, for instance, was quoted as saying "The Bolshevik leaders are finding his [De Leon's] ideas of an Industrial State in advance of Karl Marx's theories... De Leon's governmental construction on the basis of industries fits admirably into the Soviet construction of the State now forming in Russia. De Leon is really the first American Socialist to affect European thought."¹

Arnold Petersen quotes Arthur Ransome's *Six Weeks in Russia in 1919* as attributing similar statements to Lenin. He cites a dispatch by Robert Minor to the *New York World*, February 8, 1919, "The American De Leon first formulated the idea of a Soviet government which grew up on his idea." (Robert Minor, later, charged that the newspaper had revised and garbled a number of his dispatches.)

L. G. Raisky, the Soviet professor, commented on a speech by John Reed, "On May 11, 1918, the *Weekly People*, the organ of the SLP, published an address by John Reed, of which the following is an excerpt. 'Premier Lenin,' said Reed 'is a great admirer of De Leon, considering him the greatest of modern Socialists... the only one who has added anything to Socialist thought since Marx.'"² (This quotation was the SLP's version of Reed's statement.) There is no direct quote nor written word by Lenin to this effect. Several writers declare that these statements of Lenin's views were exaggerated. Charles A. Madison, author of *Critics and Crusaders*, comments on the above quotation, "Lenin apparently nowhere wrote down his opinions on De Leon; there is no evidence that any of De Leon's ideas were incorporated into Lenin's theories and practices."³

Professor Raisky, who was fulsome in his praise of De Leon, felt the need of caution in accepting these statements as fact. He said, "In a private conversation, B. Reinstein told me that at the end of May, 1919, he spoke with Lenin about De Leon. 'But did not De Leon err on the side of sectarianism?' Lenin asked, half jestingly, half earnestly, but added that he was mightily impressed by the sharp and deep criticism of reformism given by De Leon in his 'Two Pages from Roman History' as well as by the fact that as far back as April, 1904, De Leon anticipated such an essential element of the Soviet system as the abolition

of Parliament and its replacement by representatives from production units.

"... Of course," warns Rasky, "this is not the Soviet system but only an element of the Soviet system. De Leon was divided from the Bolsheviks by his failure to understand the inevitability and necessity of a transitional epoch in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat."⁴

Undoubtedly Lenin was an admirer of De Leon and considered him as one of the outstanding American Marxist speakers and writers of his day. He called attention to De Leon's writings in a letter to Bukharin, in the summer of 1920. The letter, in full, reads: "To N. I. Bukharin. Comrade Bukharin, I think we should publish in Russian, De Leon's 'Two Pages from Roman History' with [Louis] Fraina's foreword and notes. I shall also write a few words.

"If you agree, will you give the word through the State Publishing House. If you don't, let's discuss it. (Signed) Lenin."⁵

De Leon and his ideas, however, were never given a blank check by Lenin. Throughout the years, Lenin directly criticized the dogmatism within the SLP. He followed the career of the SLP and its strong and weak points were thoroughly familiar to him.

De Leon's fight against opportunism is discussed in Lenin's pamphlet, *Left Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, in which he quotes De Leon's phrase, "Labor Lieutenants of the Capitalist Class." Praise for De Leon's fight against opportunism is imbedded in a strong argument in favor of working in the reactionary-led unions. It seems clear that, intentionally, Lenin was on the one hand praising De Leon's fight against right wing opportunists and outright traitors to socialism, and at the same time calling on workers to drop all sectarianism and throw themselves into the mass economic struggles.

He wrote, "When, because of the reactionary and counter-revolutionary character of the *heads* of the trade unions, they [the German "left" Communists] jump to the conclusion that ... we must leave the trade unions!! That we must refuse to work in them!! This is such an unpardonable blunder as to be equiv-

alent to the greatest service the Communists could render the bourgeoisie. For our Mensheviks, like all the opportunist, social chauvinist, Kautskyan trade union leaders, are nothing but 'agents of the bourgeoisie in the labor movement' (as we have always said the Mensheviks were) or 'labor lieutenants of the capitalist class' to use the splendid and absolutely true expression of the followers of De Leon in America. To refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions means leaving the insufficiently developed backward masses of the workers under the influence of the reactionary leaders..."⁶

This rare mention of De Leon by Lenin demonstrates Lenin's kindly method of criticism when dealing with the mistakes of honest socialists. It is hardly accidental, of course, that Lenin placed his praise of De Leon's phrase in his chapter, "Should Revolutionaries Work in Reactionary Trade Unions?"

During the 1914-1917 imperialist war period, after the Second International was shattered by the pro-war stand of its most prominent leaders—Guesde, Vandervelde, Kautsky, etc.—Lenin sought in all countries for Marxists who would support the workers' revolution and oppose the imperialist war. In the United States, he attempted to organize a bloc composed of left Socialist Party members, class-conscious professionals, and the Socialist Labor Party followers of De Leon. He hoped a new Marxist party could be formed which would be pro-Soviet, anti-imperialist, anti-war and which would cast off such opportunist leaders as Victor Berger, of the SPA's right wing.

This reflected the desire for unity held by rank and file members of both the SLP and SPA for a long time. The demand for unity was part of the left wing programs of both Socialist parties in America. In 1915, Debs led a movement for unity against the war. Boris Reinstein led unity forces in the SLP, for which he was finally expelled. For years, Second International Congresses had called for such unity in America.

Arnold Petersen, De Leon's disciple, after his death opposed any unity moves. He succeeded in defeating John Reed's appeal in 1918, by a narrow margin. For a short time the SLP moved toward unity with the pro-Soviet forces, after the 1917 revolu-

tion. Even Petersen, in 1941, had a few favorable words to say about the Soviet Union. He reversed himself and as late as 1950 was making slashing written and verbal attacks on the Soviet Union. At all conferences arranged throughout the years between the two American Socialist parties, Petersen was on the side of the anti-unity forces.⁷

Lenin, in seeking a unified American Marxist party, referred to the SLP and the left wing of the Socialist Party, as the real revolutionaries in America. He consistently wrote against the opportunism within the Socialist Party of America and the sectarian dogmatism within the Socialist Labor Party, in his efforts to unite Marxists of both groups.

His *Letter to the American Workers* was written in August, 1918 and published in December of that year in the United States. Lenin praised the anti-war stand of Debs and other left wing members of the SPA, as well as SLP members.⁸

In this Letter, Lenin recalled a speech he made at Berne, Switzerland about Debs, quoting Debs' article written in the *Appeal to Reason*, September 11, 1915. "I am not at all surprised", said Lenin, "that Wilson, the head of the American billionaires and servant of the capitalist sharks, has thrown Debs into prison."

Lenin, in the Berne speech (February 8, 1916) called Debs "the most popular leader of the American Socialists..." He quoted the following paragraph from Debs' *Appeal* article. "I am not a capitalist soldier. I am a proletarian revolutionist. I do not belong to the regular army of the plutocracy, but to the irregular army of the people. I refuse to obey any command to fight for the ruling class—I am opposed to every war but one; I am for that war with heart and soul, and that is the world wide war of the social revolution. In that war, I am prepared to fight in any way the ruling class may make it necessary."

Lenin adds, "This is what Debs, the American Behel, the beloved leader of the American workers writes."⁹ This is one example where Lenin expressed appreciation of the left wing of the Socialist Party, as well as the Socialist Labor Party.

In August, 1917, from Helsingfors, where Lenin was in hiding

for several weeks, after the July counter-revolution in Russia, he wrote to the Bureau of the Central Committee Abroad (in Stockholm) calling for the convening of an international conference of the Left opposed to the war. Among the world supporters of the Left, he mentioned, "The SLP of America..."¹⁰ He also asked for copies of the *Weekly People* and the *Socialist Call*.

One of Lenin's important works was his Letter to the Socialist Propaganda League in America, which published a left wing Socialist magazine in Boston. Unfortunately, the first part of this letter has been lost. Written in 1915, the letter shows Lenin's fight on two fronts. Regarding opportunism, Lenin polemized against the capitulation of right wing leaders of the SPA, under guise that the government was calling for a "war of defense." On trade unions, he stated: "We agree with you that we must stand against craft unions and for industrial unions, i.e. for large, centralized trade unions, and for the most active participation of *all* party members in the economic struggle and in *all* the trade unions and cooperative organizations of the working class."

He spoke, also, of sectarianism in the SLP: "We have never objected in our press to uniting the Socialist Party and the Socialist Labor Party in America. We have always referred to the letters of Marx and Engels (especially those addressed to Sorge, an active participant of the American Socialist movement) in which *both* condemn the sectarian character of the SLP."¹¹

Any serious student of Lenin and his relationship to American socialists, must consider it naive to believe, as did Rasky, that "Up to 1918, Lenin was apparently unacquainted with the works and views of De Leon."

In fact, in 1907, Lenin published a major article, in the Russian language, on the situation of the SLP in America, as compared to the German Social Democracy, and labeled sectarianism as the main problem in the socialist movement of the United States.

He said, "What Marx and Engels most of all criticized in

British and American Socialism is isolation from the labour movement. The burden of all their numerous comments on the Social Democratic Federation in England and on the American Socialists is the accusation that they have reduced Marxism to a dogma, to a 'rigid orthodoxy' that they consider it a 'credo and not a guide to action,' that they are incapable of adapting themselves to the labour movement, marching side by side with them, which, although helpless theoretically, is a living and powerful mass movement."¹²

A motion in the 1918 SLP National Executive Committee, to support the Soviets, had lost by a narrow margin. Again, those who fought for unity were forced out of the SLP. Many SLP members, later, joined the Communist Party.

De Leon, himself, more than a decade earlier, had maneuvered with the almost ever present demand of many rank and filers for unity with the Socialist Party left wing. When Olive Johnson made a public appeal, for unity his deep feelings on the subject were revealed in a letter to her, written November 25, 1909.

"As an 'element,'" De Leon wrote, "I consider the S.P. folks worthless. If they were to come into the SLP in any numbers, I should want to have them strip to the skin; I would burn their clothes to kill the microbes; then the stripped S.P., I would put through a Turkish bath and then through a Russian bath, and then I would hang him by the heels for a spell and let the fresh air blow through him. Such a rotten element as they are..."¹³

This was written at a time when Haywood, a member of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party was leading large strikes, when Ella Reeve Bloor was fighting for women's rights and many left wing socialists were engaged in workers' movements. This bitter approach influenced his disciples to travel the same road.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XVIII

1. Arno-Dosch-Fleuret (Correspondent of the New York World), January 31, 1918. See Arnold Petersen, *Daniel De Leon, Social Architect*, Vol. I, New York, New York Labor News Co., 1941, pp. 61, 62.

2. L. C. Raisky, *The Struggle Against Opportunism. An Appraisal of Daniel De Leon*, New York Labor News Co., 1932, p. 47.
3. Charles A. Madison, *Critics and Crusaders*, New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1947, p. 470.
4. *The Struggle Against Opportunism*, p. 48. For discussions between Lenin and Louis Fraina about De Leon, see Paul F. Brissenden, *The Industrial Workers of the World*, Columbia University Press, 1919, pp. 239-242.
5. This letter was first published in 1924, in the magazine "Zhizn", No. 1. Later published in *Lenin on the USA*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1967, p. 536.
6. *Ten Classics of Marxism*, New York, International Publishers, 1940, Chapter 10, "Left Wing Communism," pp. 36, 37.
7. Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin, *De Leon Archives, Weekly People*, April 29, 1950, article by Arnold Petersen, "A Chapter in SLP History."
8. V. I. Lenin, *Letter to the American Workers*, New York, International Publishers, 1934.
9. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, 1916, 1917, New York, International Publishers, 1942, p. 30.
10. *Letters of Lenin*, Translated and edited by Elizabeth Hill and Doris Mudie, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1937, pp. 431, 432, 433.
11. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, *The Imperialist War 1914-1915*, New York, International Publishers, 1930, pp. 374 ff.
12. V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. XI, *The Theoretical Principles of Marxism*, Preface to the Russian Edition of *Letters of Marx and Engels to Sorge, etc.* Printed in Russian April 6, 1907, Published in the United States by International Publishers, New York, pp. 721, 722, 723.
13. Olive Johnson, *Daniel De Leon Our Comrade*. In *Daniel De Leon, The Man and His Work*. A Symposium. Book I, New York, National Executive Committee, SLP, 1919 (Republished 1934), p. 116.
(Numerous letters and articles of Lenin during 1915, 1916, 1917 referred to the split among American socialists. Included were Letter to Comrade Safarov [2/10/16] "Task of the Opposition in France." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, International Publishers, 1942, p. 32; and (2) Proposals submitted by the CC of the RSDLP to the Second Socialist Conference [4/16/16], *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 76.)

CHAPTER XIX

DE LEON'S DEATH AND LEGACY

Daniel De Leon died on May 11, 1914, his death hastened by poverty and overwork.

The SLP mourned him in the *Weekly People*, May 16, 1914: "In losing him we lose a man whose very life was dedicated to the emancipation of the working class from wage slavery; whose very name was synonymous with the struggle of the proletariat for economic freedom... When the history of the labor movement and the Social Revolution will be written by future historians, his name will be mentioned with reverence as one who gave of the fullness of his truly wonderful mind and heart that the Disinherited of the earth might come into their own."¹

Memorial services were held in Kessler's Theatre on the East Side of New York City. Speakers included Dr. Julius Hammer, Rudolph Katz, Joseph Schlossberg, Secretary of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Arnold Petersen, James T. Hunter, A. E. Reimer and Henry Jager.

Boris Reinstein sent a wire to the funeral from Buffalo, mourning "the loss of the greatest modern pathfinder for the international revolution.

"... Our battle cry must be 'Daniel De Leon is dead; long live De Leonism, the Marxism of the 20th century.'"

New York newspapers carried the story of great crowds attending the funeral and widespread grief. The *New York Times*, May 18, 1914, recorded that "fully 30,000 persons turned out to pay their respects to Mr. De Leon, and hundreds knelt in prayer as the coffin was carried by them."

The *Newark Evening News* of May 21, 1914 was moved to

philosophize, "When three thousand people gather in a public building to attend a funeral service and half a dozen leaders of a great organization eulogize the life and work of the decedent; when fifty thousand line the streets through which the funeral procession passes, and some of them kneel in the streets in prayer, it is evident that someone with an unusual personality has died. Such are the circumstances reported in connection with the funeral of Daniel De Leon, who will be recalled as a one time professor in Columbia University, who abandoned his profession and its emoluments to live among the plain people and work for their uplift.

"There will be plenty to criticize De Leon as there were many to mourn him. They will say he made a great mistake and wasted his life. But do men ever waste their lives when they live for their ideals, making daily sacrifices in order that they may be true to the principles in which they believe and the cause to which they have dedicated their energies? The example of their devotion offsets their errors of judgment, if they are errors... the man who has it in him to live for what he believes, at any cost, ought never to pass away unmourned."²

Charles Corregan, one of De Leon's disciples, a few months after his death, paid tribute to the transformation of the SLP by De Leon, "... With him began the history of a real Socialist movement in America, the foremost country of capitalism... He found the movement divided and confused... He bequeathed to us a movement self reliant, confident of itself... He gave it a literature and a language all its own... He found it uninformed, intractable, uncertain, uncouth, unAmerican, inarticulate, and he left it a movement fit to take its place as the great movement of the age and to meet, its opponents with clear vision, aim certain and tongue unloosed."³

Morris Hillquit, De Leon's political enemy for many years, who often used the word "fanatic" in describing him, paid grudging praise in his autobiography. "De Leon was unquestionably a person of great erudition, rare ability, and indomitable energy. He served the cause of Socialism, as he saw it, with single-minded devotion. He had unshakable faith in Socialism

and its future, but his greater faith was in himself. He never admitted a doubt about the soundness of his interpretation of the Socialist philosophy or the infallibility of his methods and tactics. Those who agreed with him were good Socialists. All who dissented from his views were enemies of the movement..."⁴

Hillquit concluded with what he considered the coup de grace, "He was the perfect American prototype of Russian Bolshevism."

Eugene Debs, too, had been the victim of De Leon's verbal and written barbs. His reaction was kinder. Two years before De Leon's death, in 1912, he said, "It is foolish to say that the SLP is dead... Many of my early lessons in Socialist economics were taught me by that little 'bunch of fanatics'... I can never forget that little band of valiant comrades—frenzied fanatics if you please—but still of the stuff of which revolutions are made. For years they were a mere handful, yet they fought as if they had legions behind them. Staunchly they upheld the red banner in the face of an indifferent or hostile world—and this years before some of those who now scoff at them had shed their bourgeois politics. There are not many of them, but few as they are, they have the backbone to stand alone. There are no trimmers or traders among them."⁵

Perhaps one of the most objective estimates of De Leon's life and work was given by Joseph Schlossberg. At the time of De Leon's death, Schlossberg was engaged in a severe struggle with the sweat shop owners. At his request, De Leon had spoken at meetings of the strikers and the unemployed. Schlossberg walked on many picket lines in front of the shops, together with other Socialists, many of them Jewish refugees from the 1905 terror and pogroms in Russia. With them he had huilt the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union.⁶

Schlossberg evaluated the forming of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, dual unionism which "wrecked the party." A year before De Leon's death, he said, he finally recognized his mistake.

"De Leon made every possible effort to reunite the socialist movement. He would have given his life to bring this about..."

wrote Schlossberg. At this time De Leon did not want to break or capture the movement. "The De Leon of the unity period was not the De Leon of 1899... He was sincere in working for socialist unity. I know whereof I speak. I have always believed that his failure hastened his death. De Leon was a great socialist but a poor psychologist, for which fault both he and the movement paid dearly..."

Schlossberg felt he owed a great debt to De Leon for his socialist education. "Daniel De Leon was the supreme intellectual figure of American Socialism... De Leon... entered into a life of want and hardship when he decided to join the labor movement. For three full years he gave himself over to the study of Karl Marx." He "blazed new paths" and carried on "widespread education among the workers."

Said Schlossberg, "I am a socialist. My gaze is fixed firmly upon socialism as the ultimate goal of the labor movement. I see no other hope. I have received my labor movement schooling in the SLP under the rigid schoolmastership of De Leon..."⁷

He was one of many Socialists and trade unionists so indebted to De Leon. Most of them, though they parted company with the SLP, clearly acknowledged their indebtedness for their social education. Among them were James Connolly, "Mother" Ella Reeve Bloor, William Z. Foster, John Williamson, (later a leader of the Communist Party, who served his apprenticeship in the SLP) and many others. Young socialists in Australia, Ireland, Scotland, England and the Scandinavian countries looked to De Leon for guidance. L. G. Raisky, in a footnote to his article discussed in the foregoing chapter, added the names of leaders of the British Communist Party indebted to De Leon: "McManus, Murphy, Tom Bell, William Paul, and other leaders."

De Leon's profound and many-sided contributions made a permanent mark on the American movement. His socialist life was a contradiction. In spite of his sectarianism, he gave Marxist substance to the Socialist movement of this time. He carried the message of scientific socialism to countless thousands of people during his meaningful career, though his work was

limited by his underestimation of the importance of the non-Socialist organizations of the masses.

If the generations following De Leon and, particularly, the youth of the labor and socialist movement, derive a lesson from his life, it must be that no revolutionary theory can be sound which forgets that social progress cannot be achieved without the support of the masses, the workers, and progressives, and farmers, men and women, Black and white.

The party that projects fundamental social change must be with the people at all times. It must express all its present needs as well as the bright socialist future.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XIX

1. Arnold Petersen, *Daniel De Leon. Social Architect*, Vol. I, New York Labor News Co., 1941, p. 282.
2. Ibid., p. 288.
3. Charles Corregan, "Daniel De Leon. An Oration," in *Daniel De Leon, The Man and His Work*, New York, National Executive Committee, SLP, 1934, pp. 179-181.
4. *Daniel De Leon. Social Architect*, pp. 133, 134, 135.
5. Ibid., p. 135.
6. Charles Elbert Zaretz, *The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America*, New York, Ancon Publishing Co., 1934, p. 106.
For the story of the Jewish Socialists in the clothing unions, see Documents of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Library, Documentary History of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, Vol. I, 1914-1916. Also Amalgamated Clothing Workers Biennial Conventions 1914-1922.
7. Joseph Schlossberg, *The Workers and Their World*, A.L.P. Committee of Local 25, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, New York, 1935, p. 340. (Issued for Schlossberg's 60th birthday.)

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